St. Blasien's Maid

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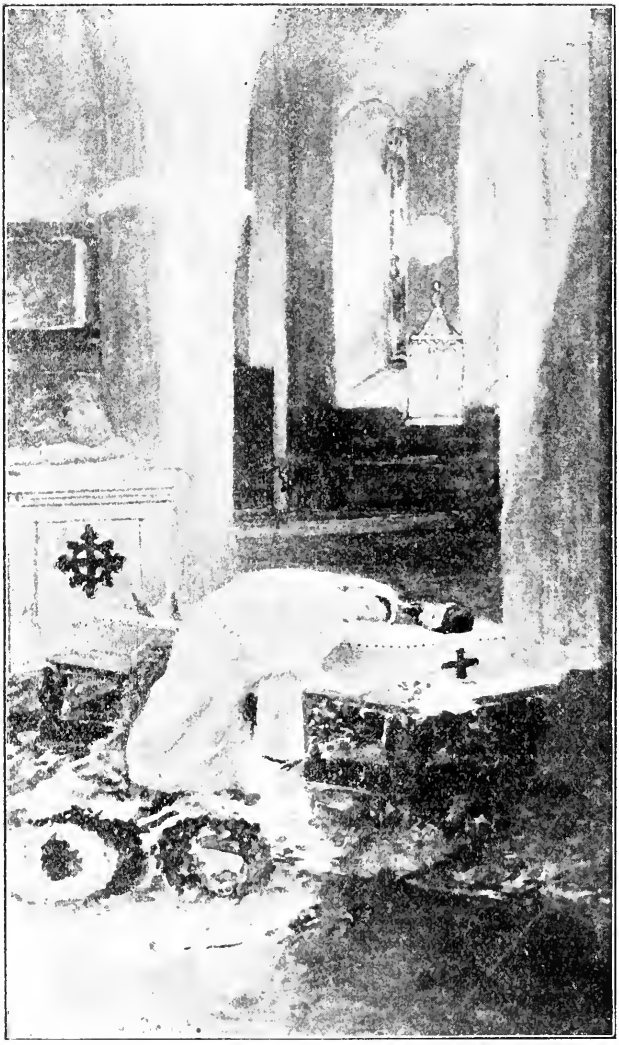

"Beside the flower wreathed bier."

St. Blasien's Maid

AN ALSACIAN IDYL

BY

Winfield Lionel Scott

DETROIT, MICHIGAN
WINN & HAMMOND
1904

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Dedication

HON. ALFRED ERSKINE BRUSH.

AS IN some sacred temple, veiled and dim,
We bow with holiest vow and prayer;
Or shrine our purest thoughts in some sweet hymn—
We place our best upon the altar there.

So I have shrined in tribute which I bring,
Of simple loyal hearts, beyond the sunlit sea;
The holiest theme of which a bard may sing,
The rarest gem in memory's treasury.

Of greater worth is one true, loyal heart,
Than all this life can offer us beside;
To hold one friend from all the world apart—
To know he will not change what e'er betide.

So, looking back across the fading years,
No statelier gift, methinks, may heaven send—
Than thou hast been; through mist of grateful tears
I write it here, the holy name of friend.

Prologue

WHERE lies in golden glamour of repose
The fair Alsacian hamlet 'mong the hills—
Against whose slopes the nooning vineyards lean,
And lowly bending orchards upward spread;
To beechen wood within whose solitude
The list'ning silence breathes of rest and peace.

This is Bettlach, Bettlach the beautiful!
Her dwellers are a hardy race, and staunch;
With hearts so leal that ne'er have beat untrue;
With faces kind where blooms the rose of health—
Which glows amid the bronze of wind and sun.
With trusting eyes whose purest depths still holds
The blessed light of childhood's innocence.

A blithesome race, who find the keenest joy
In simple things, as song of bird and brook,
In gently waving bough and wreathing bloom,
Their happy songs among the vintage rise,
Their cheery call is heard across the fields,
And free good natured jest in simple mirth,
Or greeting unto stranger as to friend:
"God keep thee safe! His blessing follow thee."

A highway broad and white leads o'er the hills,
And where it climbs in steepest upward curve,

The quaint old homes of Bettlach cluster close.
Those stuccoed homes of creamy tinted clay,
About whose eaves the mellow touch of time
Is seen in many fading hues; and there
The mosses creep across the olden tiles,
And tiny plants a nurturing lodgment find.
And, too, the wooden beams, in strange device,
As through the stucco shown, are gray with age.

Here ceiled in oak of crudest workmanship—
Where overhead the rough hewn beams are laid;
A dearth of comforts shown—in plainest deal
Are bench and table formed, and on the floor
Is strewn the clean white sand; upon the ledge
Of window each, where whitest curtains sway,
The myrtle green and fragrant mignonette
Are side by side, where massed carnations droop.

'Tis here in sweet content the peasants bide;
They gather here about the humble board—
Their Pater Noster say with bowed head,
The sacred sign—then feast on frugal fare;
So few their needs, so rich their store of faith,
So beautiful in its simplicity.

With easy flight steps lead aloft, to where
The guest hath place; a simple room, and there
A bed with feathers piled, a chair, maybe,
A table rude, and from the wall, the Christ
Keeps loving ward o'er well earned sleep and rest.

Not all the homes which Bettlach boasts are these;
Quite to the vale good naturedly they crowd;
A cart track here, and there a zig-zag path
All friendly wise leads past each humble door,
Where courts are set, and o'er their palings rude
The massing roses smile, and lilies fair
In serried ranks, vie for supremacy.
While clamb'ring o'er the walls, the ripened grapes
In sunshine steeped are storing amber wine.

A little laugh of water floweth down,
From hidden nook, among the wooded hills,
Where roses wild, with ferns and tangled vines
O'ershadow deep a tiny crystal spring,
Set jewelwise 'mid mosses cool and green.
So slight a stream and yet it needs must toil,
For at the smith's a curious wheel is set—
But what its use I ne'er have asked or learned,
And this glad brook sings only of the hills.

With gentle trend the road dips to the vale,
O'er arched with laden bough of fruit and nut;[1]
On either hand, in heated vibrant air
The flaming poppies dash the breadths of wheat;
Adown the smiling vale which bears its name,
Winds still the merry Ill, marking its course
In many a fleeting glimpse of shimmering light,
To where the distant fells are lost to view,
All netted soft in azure air; and still
The road winds on and on, may lead at last
To where all roads are said to end, in Rome.

A quaint old church, St. Blasien, here hath stood [2]
Through many cycles of the storied past.
Time's ruthless touch is on its crumbling tower,
In nave and trancept silent shadows kneel.
The incense lingers round its altars old,
And piercing through the emblazoned wall—
All agleam with pictured saints—
An image glows of Christ, the crucified;
Where kneeling oft the faithful peasants come
To look upon their suffering Lord.
Such pain
And grief it wears, this weary, human face,
Which with compassion most divine is blent;
And where the beaten gold hath framed it in
With arabesques, and many rare designs,
The purest lilies wreath their fragrant snow.

There in the holy hush which fills this shrine
Kneels one lone worshiper, with tear-wet face;
But as a fair Madonna motionless.
While he whose hand this wond'rous picture wrought
E'en then was driving down the sunlit way,
Which leads from Basle to Alsace's fairest vale.

Part One

Part One

WHEN Paul Evard, brush and pallette laid aside,
To art and study for a season bid adieu;
With fellow students—boon companions they—
Of Schwarzwald, and the Rhine they made a tour.
One sweet June day, when all the world was fair,
With melody and fragrance in the air,
Had chanced upon this hamlet 'mid the hills,
Remotely hid from travel's beaten track,
Unsullied thus from touch of outer world.

Could those return, whose sacred dust hath slept
A thousand years beneath St. Blasien's walls,
In customs would and worship find no change;
The simple household ways, the homely toil—
With pilgrimage and all the old time fests,
The blessing of the fields—glad harvest home—[3]
The ripened grain on sacred altar lain.[4]

This picture fair! when on some Sabbath morn
The happy children, clothed in raiment white,
With garlands bound about their sunny hair,
With smiling face above the golden sheaves;
They bear the ripened wheat, and mingled bloom—
Lilies and roses twined with ivy green.
While some, perchance, have sought the weaver's art,
And shining ribbons bind the prize they bear.

With hymn and prayer they seek the olden shrine
And on its altar lay their fragrant sheaves.
Oh! faith most beautiful! nor any blight
When mingled with the springtime seed 'tis sown,
Shall touch or harm the grain so blessed as this.

There envy hath no place, nor greed of gain;
No bart'ring of the soul for things of clay—
That perisheth 'though used with patient care.
There standeth wide the ever open door
In greeting warm, when stranger feet are led
To crave a shelter, or a wayside rest;
The coarsest crust when with such grace 'tis given
Are richer viands than a king's repast.

All this akin to that which held a place
In Evard's soul; here might true rest be found.
And deeming thus begged to be left awhile.
Of turmoil weary and of needless strife,
Here would he find the balm which nature yields.

His companions chaffed him thus: "Hast dart
From some fair maiden's eyes thy heart empaled,
Till helpless captive thou art held, or hast
Thou wearied of companionship like ours?
Shall lighter prattle cease, and sober themes
The passing hours employ? Are not the song
And jest meet for our holiday?"
"Nay."
To learn this people's lore, he fain would stay,
Their ways are quaint and old, and subjects, too,

For studies rare were here. "Would they proceed?"
He would them join anon at Chamonix.

Thus he prevailed, and all reluctantly
Farewells were said, for he was well beloved,
And few could fill the place of genial Paul.
He bade God speed, and saw them take their leave,
And watched their course adown the sunlit vale;
E'er yet the pearly dew had left the blooms,
And every breeze that swept the thyme-fringed banks
Brought echoes sweet, of happy, college songs—
And laughter free from joyous, youthful hearts.

And then two, restful, perfect weeks were his.
Through wood and field he wandered at his will—
Or lay at ease, through listless, summer hours,
And through his soul, so strangely sweet, there stole
Delightful dreams.
In the deliciousness
Of full content—and faith and hope restored—
He wandered oft through bosky glen and grove,
And let the busy world go as it would.

Thus sped the days, until he, too, must go;
Such precious days! like threaded gems they were—
And in his heart he shrined their memories;
And these he held, a heritage indeed,
Which ever brighter grew as years advanced.

With study close, which only artists know,
When toil and pastime ever more are art,

When high ambition lures, and fills the soul
For work that rivals all the Masters old—
Till in each canvas throbs a life divine,
But baffles still the hand that fain would grasp,
Till prayer—despair and tears of blood it holds,
When finished 'tis.
Thus Paul Evard had toiled;
It was his hand St. Blasien's picture wrought—
That tender face, the lilies wreathed this day.
Such, too, the task, nor rest nor peace were his
Till it completed was, a thing that breathed.

The winter of his northern home prolonged
Had been; when storm succeeded storm until
His health had failed, and left him weak and wan.
He cast about him for a place of rest—
Where health again his vigor might restore.
A memory stirred within, of dear Alsacian days,
And longing filled his soul.
He fain would dwell
Again with this Arcadian race,
The kindly deeds, so tenderly performed—
The gracious gift of flowers, and lucious fruits;
The restful peace of field and wood hid thall
Tugged at his heart, until he needs must go.

Such missives, too, had come through passing years,
They plead for sight of his dear face once more;
And every heart an earnest welcome held—
Each humble door for him stood opened wide—
While wistful eyes turned ever toward the sea.

They, too, had told how, when the picture came,
The peasants each in holiday attire
Had made the shrine a fragrant bower of bloom;
Had hung the dingy walls with banners bright—
Had twined in wreaths the shining myrtle spray,
And when the altar stood at last complete,
In rare device, of woodland blossoms frail,
With high and solemn Mass and priestly rites
Had set the sacred picture in its place.

Now borne toward this Mecca of his joys,
Where throbbed the sun on fields of ripened grain,
And brooded there his smile ineffable;
Then like a benediction peace enfolded him,
And in his heart an answering peace was found.

Clematis fragrant snow the boskage wreathed,
Which by the spendthrift breeze was wafted wide,
Till all the land with its spilled fragrance filled.
On every hand the dainty bloom was spread—
Sweeter than Venus trod 'neath Ida's pines,
And fit for feet of peerless Persephone.

The journey ends, and then from fir-clad height
This hamlet lay close clasped within the thrall
Of lang'rous Summer fast asleep.

"Now, God be praised! here is our foreign friend."
This was the housefrau's greeting, when he came.
Then welcome leal—the clasp of ready hands—
And joyful smile—through mist of tender tears.

The news went forth, home from the field they throng
With eager haste, their brows bedewed with toil,
And greeting gave, such as few men have known.

Evard, throughout that glorious afternoon
Reception held, a guest and host as well was he.

In the twilight told him legends quaint and old,
The won'drous deeds of ancient lore.
Here waged
A battle fierce, And yon a mighty army lay,[5]
That long besieged, to Death succumbed at last.
Here was a shrine, and there a castle, where
Some lord of old had dwelt; at night a ghost
Walked headless; there in yonder field a rill
Gushed out, when stalf of St. Walberga pierced
The hillside, when her many virgins pure
Were famished on their toilsome way.
Yon wood,
Three graves of martyrs, mark a place of prayer.
And in this glen, the home of Elfin bands,
Who roved the fields at night, transforming all
They met, beneath the noon on certain nights.
They sat in converse thus, through gloaming late
Till curfew rang, and then, lights were out.

When 'mid the silence of St. Blasien's aisles,[6]
Paul Evard saw the pictured face of Christ
Upon the altar stand enwreathed in blooms,
Of snowy whiteness—sainted lilies fair,
Which in dying left their sweetest odor there.

One ray of light, in fitful splendor fell
Through window pane, and o'er the face
Before him, with a smile of welcoming;
It upward crept like hands caressing, to
The thorns whose cruel piercing, twined the brow.

Long, long he stood and gazed upon it, till
His wonder grew; it seemed, than his hand, an other
Must have painted what he saw. No longer he
Remembered, tears and strivings sore—
Until, one day achievement lifted, and
The picture finished was.
Bethought him then
The lilies! wondered who had placed them there;
Ah, yes! to honor his return had they
The blossoms twined; but in succeeding days
Were fresher lilies ever more replaced
In lieu of those who dying left a faint
Perfume, like mem'ries wafted from the past.

Ofttimes a worshiper before it knelt;
Found true restfulness within the calm.
Wayfarers, too, were there.
One golden morn—
When 'round the altar incense lingered still—
From service which was ended now, saw he
A maiden enter, bearing fragrant bloom.

Then long she knelt and wove the blossoms, with
A tender care; saw the tear-drops welling,
The lips all tremulous with fervent prayer.

And then with eyes downcast she passed him,
Unheeding where he stood, by friendly screen
Of column shielded, where he saw her leave.
But on the street he never met her, no means
He had to learn her name, "The angel of
The lilies," named; this maid so stainless seemed.
Romance most tender wove he 'round her then;
Her innocence, the lilies symbolized.
Her guardian he stood and shielded her
From every danger with his strong right arm.

The tuneful days of June were speeding on
With all their bloom and balm; the laughing hours
Brought health and joy, and his eager soul was
Filled with longing for the conflict earnest.
Then he sought an inspiration from the
Scenes about him; so would he paint, his work
To rival all that he had done before.
His peasant friends were those he painted in
Their every day attire; in home or field
Were they busied with their duties.
On eves
Of Sabbaths, restful, they sang so blithe [7]
Their German airs, till day blew out her torches
And left the land in slumber 'neath the stars.

At times he placed his easel close beside
The way, where travelers paused his work to view.
From the fields the home returning peasants stood
Well pleased to watch the picture as it grew.

Now some quaint home, so picturesque and old—
Where wreathing vines upheld the crumbling wall
And clad each thatch in leafage green and cool,
And only door and window leaving for
The wefts of rarer light, where swayed and tossed
The fragrant roses, held in tender thrall,
By tended hedge and palings white.
Here, too,
The lombards tall, in dewy splendor sheened,
They seemed the faithful warders of the place.
Beneath their shadows cool a crystal spring,
That sped away to vale, like startled fawn,
And quickly hid within the bosom of
The Ill; and one lone and aged washer spread
Her whitened linens there, till all around
Were meadows drifted as with stainless snow.

Thus all the day he wrought, and whistled low,
While at his back agape the loiterers stood,
And watched the magic picture as it grew,
Although its technique was not understood.
Yet o'er the counterfeit of common things,
As wayside weed, or lichened stone, or bough
They raised a cry of marvel, stood amazed,
And hailed to distant comrades, "Haste and see!
Sweet Jesu! What wond'rous gift is this?
Ah, this near perfect is, the tiles alone
On Francept's house are much too new, and bright,
And Rader's wife is washing, only see!"
And thus commenting, gave a critique true.

And burly fellows, bringing down the wood,
Where erst some wald recht monarch had succumbed;[8]
The shrine he bore, was to some younger tree,
Conveyed, and left a space—a void—where stood
This patriarch before.
In wonder long they stood;
"Had we this gift," they said, "no longer would
We need to moil for pittance such as ours."
Was it not difficult? they asked, if art,
Which seemed so wonderful as this, to learn?
One answer made, "it cometh of itself;"
And knew not, artists are not made, but born.

Part Two

Part Two

IN the vineyards lay the vines neglected—
It was the garnering season of the hay;
When mowers brown and blythe, swung rythmic scythe,
With its soothing over word to grasses tall,
As down they fell. When stone on steel is laid
Methinks no sweeter rythm hath the summer time;
Nor fragrance more delightful is than hath
The hay, when yielding up its soul beneath
The kisses of the sun.
For oh! the song
And laughter gay, through the golden haze of eve,
When wains come lumbering home with hay.

Untrained, the vines had rampant grown,
And thus must be restrained. "It might
A pleasure prove, and would he care to go?"
Thus asked the kindly old housefrau, one day,
When ready for the fields, equipped with bands
Of straw to bind them captives to the stake.
Evard, for nonce thus putting art aside,
Expressed an eager readiness to go—
And followed where she led, across the fields,
O'er shadowed by the wood, down to the warm
And sun-kissed slope, where smiling vineyards lay.

Among the toilers, one of finest mold—
Who e'en in sabots moved with stately ease;
About the head, the loosely knotted hood,
Hid eyes that were like violets, half afraid—
Too shy to look the glad sky in the face.

With constant toil the shapely hands were browned;
He noted how they deftly gathered up
The tangled vines, and firmly wrapped then
The bands of dampened straw; her fingers deft
Gave perfect twist, and thus secured were they.
Her low, sweet voice, his ear the cadence caught—
Like strains that o'er the starlit waters steal.
That form familiar grew; bethought him then,
Ah, truly! this must be my lily maid.

Thus questioned our Evard. "Pray, who this maid
In kerchief white may be?" The housefrau smiled,
And answer made. "Kind sir! we all who here
White kerchiefs wear; that one is Husher's frau,
And this is I, and she is Bernardine;
Alas, dear heart! an orphan lone is she,
Who with the good Adora, hath her home
In humble cot beneath yon linden baum."

And with that freedom which the German hath,
Then turned the housefrau to Bernardine,
And saith: "My liebling! I've given to
This friend your name. The Ecce Homo he
Hath painted, we so dearly prize; this gift
He made for us, in home beyond the sea."

An instant, upward glorious eyes were raised,
Forth looked the angel of her soul, and then,
Like starbeams drowned in rain, the lashes swept
The eyes again; the rose hue mantled e'en
Her brow. In accents low, reply she made,
Then turned again unto her wayward vines.

Twilight with eyes of starry sadness
Bade the weary, patient toilers homeward,
Till like silent shadows, through the scented dusk
Sped they, and halo-like each kerchief's snow
Lit up the gloom, as in some cathedral old
And dim the Virgin's sainted head is shown.

As they loitered homeward through the twilight
Evard heard a tale of sorrow, grievous,
How severed by the cruel hand of fate—
Although through years they mourn with bitter tears,
True hearts may break, and weep alone apart.

Emile and Bernardine together grew;
E'en from the hours of earliest infancy they oft
Afield had wept and waiting hungered while
Their mothers toiled; thus found mid summer's heat
The lesson which in poverty is learned.

When children grown they wandered oft across
The sunlit fields, and there he bound her brow
With chaplets fair—to call her sister, learned:
They every joy and sorrow gladly shared;
Far into later years their innocence
They kept, holding still this bond of kinship.

But, ah! one day with feet atremble, touched
That border land, where all must stand, our youth
O'er past, a broader life before.
'Twas then
Those simple hearts first understood a strange,
New love had grown, full nurtured by the years;
Thought each to hide this secret then, enshrined
Within their inmost soul, and deemed it safe;
But things were not as they had been.
There grew
Restraint, the tell-tale blushes—the down cast eye—
Bespoke too well love's consciousness.

Oft Bernardine sat by herself, enrapped
In roseate dreams, and yet could ne'er have told
Their import sweet, had she been asked.
Emile,
His heart was from his keeping gone, and yet
He dared not tell; ofttimes he wandered by
Himself, down some lone path, where no one came—
Beneath the shade of pines aeolian laid,
Within, an answering sadness, yet he knew
No cause.
There came a time when vows they spoke—
And plighted troth—and heart to heart revealed.
Oh, rhythm! and the cadence, sweeter far,
Than joyous brook that singeth onward through
The blossoms, of some dewy, meadow nook;
The song her happy heart kept singing, with
Its echoes softly ringing through the days.

Across the land red handed carnage swept,
And when the smoke of conflict cleared away
Alsace the beautiful reverted to
The German hands.
Between those nations each
Must choose. Emile, whose sire beside the great
Napoleon fought, was loyal to his France,[9]
And with her cast his lot; nor doubted he
The woman whom he loved, would join him there
Most willingly; alas! the mother old
She found the dear home ties too strong to rend,
And so, Emile still toiled and yearned for them.
The die was cast, and he dare not return.

Before his easel in the lanes Evard
Still whistled merrily, the while his thoughts
Elsewhere, while ever more this vision 'rose
Of maid amid the vines, with trusting eyes
Of blue, which looked into his own, were those
Of Bernardine.
He to the vineyard went,
Where silence reigned supreme, deserted quite,
It was, and there he dreamed amid the vines
Her hands had touched, how well his pencil wrought
Their counterpart, his faithful sketch book showed.

Amid the shadows and the silence of
St. Blasien lone, with naught of life save that
Faint ember which before the Host is shown,
There, too, he dreamed the passing hours away—
Such dreams as suited only time and place.

This sacred picture on the altar seemed
A mute companionship; still that face
In lilies wreathed—those sainted lilies pure—
And yet, alas! the lily maiden saw
He never anywhere.
This ambition
In his soul was wakened; to the Salon
He would one glowing canvas send; he'd paint
This self same vineyard, and as Pomona she
Its central figure be; beyond should lie
The valley, where brooding like a dove, is peace,
With summer skies above it smiling, clear
As infant's eyes.
But how solve this problem?
Was she not too shy to pose as model,
This Bernardine, this modest lily maid?

Still o'er this subject pondering, Evard
So chanced, one day, upon Maria, who sat
Beneath the roses clustering 'round her door.
This Maria was sister to the master of
The hamlet's school. Ah! this indeed is well,
She can assist me much in this, thought he;
And so he paused to pluck a rose, and her
A salutation gave; and then conversed

Of household things, and then of books and art,
And last of his desire—of what he hoped;
Already was the canvas stretched for use,
The background roughly in was laid, he yet
A model lacked e'er he could set to work;
So deftly brought the subject 'round at last.

"Our Bernardine!" Maria exclaimed, aghast.

"'Tis she I mean, thou wilt assist me, this
I know."
"Not I, indeed! I fear that this
Is not the proper thing to do; and she
Would ne'er consent; and, too, her time is filled
With tasks."
"The hay is home—the labor of
The vineyards done, pray what is there for her
To do?"
"Not much, poor Bernardine! and yet
Till harvest's golden prime, she from the woods
Must faggots bring—and stick by stick convey
Till winter's wood is home."
"Mean you to say
Those slender arms must bear the rugged woods?
On her dependeth their source of warmth?
Regret most lamentable! such tender life
Be sacrificed for one that worthless is."

"Our Bernardine counts this but joy, so fond
Of this Adora old."

"May heaven's joy
Be hers! poor child! she ne'er shall bear the wood
Whilst I remain; and then dost think that there
Objections farther are? Thou art my friend!"

"I fear, kind sir! this thing cannot be done,
For there are those her service might require."

"Might they not be induced their rights to yield
Were I their fee outvaluing to pay
For lesser hours of toil? For surely they
At heart her interest have!"
"It can't be done!"

"Still I believe it can! Thou art my friend,
And might come with her each morn, for an hour
Or so, it need not hinder thee from work,
Thy hands art doing now, and it might be
Amusing, too."
"And I my household duties all
Neglect, leave Joseph dine on viands cold,
Or wait for me? Nay, nay! although I were
A thousand times thy friend."
"I have a thought!
And thou my friend must help; 'tis this, get her
Consent; I will transfer from Burgomaster's field
Some stocks of grape, transplanting them within
The orchard at the rear, and neath the boughs
My easel set, and the Adora at
Her shaded lattice watch us as we work.
Come, come! cans't thou objections farther have?

E'en thou! and wilt assist? My heart is on
This matter set."
"Ah, men will have their way!
And foolish women yield, 'twas ever thus,
Since Adam's time; and thou no exception art!
My master! speak thy wish, it shall be done."

Submissively her hands she folded then.

"'Tis this, the morn, on good Adora call,
There broach the subject of the painter's skill;
What wond'rous thing is art! and speak thou of
St. Blasien's picture if there's need, make sure
That Bernardine shall hear; tell her my wish—
Of what I hope to do—plead well my cause,
But let her not refuse; and thus to thee
I shall indebted be."
He held her hand
In brief farewell, and then he left her 'neath
The roses thoughtful there. To Evard, all
The world of rose hue seemed, success assured.

There came a sound of lumbering, jarring wheels,
When Bernardine forth from the lattice looked
At morn, and saw the loaded wains of wood
Halt at her door, and leave their load.
Questioned,
They smiled, for such their orders were, the pay
Advanced. The women wondered, while they wept
For joy; they counted o'er the friends

Who thus would do, but ne'er thought they of him
He who sojourned within their gates.
And then
Maria came, and o'er the busy click
Of needles bright, she told who sent the wood;
She of his talent spoke—the picture sketched.
And when she paused, the good Adora said,
While grateful tears rained o'er her patient face,
Now was a burden lifted from her heart;
Had wondered much how it would come about;
This bringing wood, too great for Bernardine;
Her slender arms had ached, the previous year,
Oft times too weary for her food at night.
"Our God doth not forget us in our need!"

Then speaking low, with tears her fears she told,
How she had weakened day by day, and soon
Must keep her bed; unable to be left,
What would they do for bread? She such a care,
And Bernardine no longer earn. Still would
She trust, had they not proof of God's dear love?
And He would not forget their greater need."

"One final wish I crave, and then, methinks,
Would gladly fold my hands and be at rest;
To see my child once more, to feel his arms
Enfold me close, to hear him speak my name.
Emile, Emile! desire consumes my soul;
I pray for strength to trust and wait."

Then to her aged, care-worn face
There came a look of yearning most intense.

"My Bernardine! God grant, I may not be
A burden ever to this blessed one."
Then tender arms enfolded her, and thus
With kisses warm on lip and brow, she hushed
Complaint.
For Bernardine the burden was,
When homeless, she had home and mother found.
The locks of gray and gold commingled there,
While tears fell silently.
"Dear heart! Dear heart!
The perfect joy of life be thine, for this,
Thy tenderness, and sacrifice for me."

"Say, what is this of picture grand we hear?
The Burgomaster's vineyard spreading far,
And at its rear, the vale all dotted o'er
With hamlets nestled 'mid the orchard boughs,
And Lands Krone far away, it crests[10]
The hill top, where the fells are growing dim.
The center hath a space not yet laid in;
I long for sight of it! desire grows keen,
I dream of it at night, and wonder what
The space will show, until at times it seems
My very heart hath in that picture grown."

"No wonder that such great desire is thine,
For thou its central figure art to be."

A look of awe stole o'er the fair, young face,
Then one of doubt.
"Pray, do I hear aright?"

"Yea! thou his model, child! and say not nay;
This conception his, that day he saw thee there
Amid the vines. The self same garb thou art
To wear, as on that day, the straw, the kerchief all,
And standing, art to hold the vines as when
Thou answering, turned to him that afternoon."

She told them of the orchard scheme—the stock
Of vines, and readily Adora gave consent.
But Bernardine, all maidenlike, demurred.
"That faded dress—the kerchief, and the straws!
How could she tie a single stock of vines
All the day long? Not one, but many need."

"Art not to tie the vines, but make pretense;
Consider well the liberal offer made;
Each hour a greater recompense than earned
All day afield.
How many maids there are
Would gladly service give and count it gain.
Couldst thou but see how grand is this Salon,
A host of pictures, I am told,
With eager crowds who thither throng to view,
And some to purchase.
Here comes the Herr.
He for himself may speak."

From the doorway
She called, "Mine Herr! we would have speech with thee."
He entering, took the proffered seat, each speck
Brushed off from that which dustless seemed before.

The old Adora, grew profuse in thanks;
She babbled of this wood—how great the strain—
How she had fretted o'er its bringing home,
She prayed for him, God's blessing manifold.

But Evard termed the obligation his;
It pleasure was, the slightest thing performed
For one so good. And then on many themes
Conversed, and then arose to take his leave;
Of that which lay so near his heart, no word
He spoke, until Adora, mentioned it.
The orchard studio—with Bernardine
As model there, were each at his command.

Then word was spread abroad, how Bernardine
Had selected been, the Priestess of the vines.
"Ach, Gott! what honor, frauline thine, 'tis grand!"
They cried.
Ah! many maids of form and face
Less fair, into the wrinkled mirror looked
And sighed, and wished she had the chosen been.

When known where he would work, regret was felt;
No right had they within the orchard gate,
To watch its growth, as in the fragrant lanes.
Yet, when he said, when it completed was
Would place, for one whole day at school, where all
Might view, they were with this content.

Part Three

Part Three

OH, freshness of the crystal hearted morn!
When silvery mists upstealeth to the sun,
Whose kiss of joy rests o'er the wakened land,
With melody and sweetest music filled—
So wild and free, and in the heart of him,
Who goeth forth, an answering melody.
Earth hath no dissonance to hearts atuned
To nature's harmony, the faintest touch
Across her vine strung lute, response brings forth.

Not yet the dew had left the wooded dells—
And where the shadow of the orchard lay,
The grasses bowed beneath its jewelled wealth.
Long e'er the sun stole 'neath the gnarled boughs,
Evard his easel placed—the choicest tints
Of pigment on his pallette spread, and was
All eager to begin; yet all imbued
With radiance of the morn, and such a morn!
All bloom and balm, and upward soaring larks
To greet the day in loftier skies.
And such divine content his being filled,
Had stood, one brief uplifted space, alone
With God.
And when the sunbeams kissed the leaves
That trembled o'er his head, the cottage grew

Astir; Adora from her lattice drew
The faded screen, and friendly welcome smiled.
The lifted latch—the door that all atremble stood,
Then motionless, as one who hesitates.

At last, with downcast eyes, so shyly through
The rustic porch, 'mid drifting petals from
The roses overhead, came Bernardine,
In kerchief white—sabots and homely garb,
Which the Alsacians wear.
The sleeves of white
Above the dimpled elbows pinned, and in
The shapely hand of brown, so lightly held,
An apron coarse, which held the dampened straw;
She smiled a greeting, radiant as the morn,
Yet ill at ease, as every move attests.

"I ready am," she said, "Yet I greatly fear
Of little service I shall be; the livelong night
Hath wakeful been, with thoughts of how to serve
Upon occasion such as this."

"And find
Thy nerves o'er wrought in consequence; hast been
Solicitous, this I appreciate;
But better still, that glow of health which sleep
Alone can give. But I forbear, thou wilt
All this forget as work proceeds, and smile
At needless fear.
Wilt sit thee here, beneath
The spreading boughs, and converse hold e'er work

Begin? I am too deep in joy's excess
For prosy toil; for all the world seems filled
With breath of roses newly born."

And there,
As side by side, o'er kerchief white, and locks
Of brown, through leaves dew sprent, the sunshine wove
Its wefts of golden light.

The while he spoke
Of dear home land—its cities—arts and ways
So new, to one who ne'er our land has seen;
She listening calmer grew. He deftly brought
The converse 'round to Alsace of present time,
And led the maid to freely speak to him,
Of their own life, and customs, too, till all
Her nervousness took flight.

Of picture just
Begun; this was to be a masterpiece
If care, and faithful work could make it such.
How she assistance best might give—
It would require a patience rare, 'twould need
So many mornings e'er 'twas done—
Till all her soul with zeal was filled; then like
A fawn she sprang erect.

"Let us to work!
Nor shall I fail thee, till success lift to
Thy brow the laurel crown; speak thou thy wish,
It shall be done; my very soul at thy
Command." And this was his desire. "But wait!"

He said. "Strive first to self forget; then think
No more of this lone stock, but all in sight
A vineyard vast, the Burgomaster's if
Thou wilt, and thou engaged to tie them all;
Were such the case, how wouldst thou do?"

She from
The clover raised the vines, the crystal dew
In showers fell, as to the stake were brought
And quickly wrapped the straws about;
She gave them there the perfect twist, and held
With dainty touch, for his approval turned.

The while she waited, roses bloomed afresh,
The same light in those glorious eyes as on
That other afternoon.

"Ah, Frauline!
Perfection this! Cast all thy needless fear
Aside; this doth my fondest hope surpass.
Cans't thou this posture for a moment hold?

Then rapidly the pencil drew, and soon
The color in was laid, forgetting self—
Forgetting time—as moment after moment sped,
Or trying, such position new to her,
Poor child! who trembling stood.

"Forgive!" he said,
"My cruel selfishness; I did not note
The flight of time, and now the morn is done.
Ah, thou art weary, patient soul! needst pose

No longer; sit thou here and view the work
Which we have done, so much accomplished in
This space, that all the figure outlined is.
Now note the perfect grace of pose.
This day
No service farther shall require, and will
No longer from thy duties now detain.
Maybe Adora needs thy care, go console
Thou her, poor soul! how ill she seems this morn."

"She rests not well, so constantly in pain,
In death alone is found a sure surcease,
For such as she. This spirit beautiful,
Earth can not long retain, I trow; so sweet
It is to have her here, and still she longs
To be at rest, she waits the messenger."

And then those eyes of heavenly blue were drenched
With tears.
While speaking words which solace brought,
He noted well the tender, tear dimmed eyes—
How beautiful they were—a longing felt
To paint her thus. Doth ought escape the eye
Of artist true?
The sunlight paled for space
So brief, what time she turning left his side;
Went toward the porch, but 'neath the roses turned
To him, and bade him call should aught require;
Then smiling waved adieu. A shower softly fell
Of petals, from the roses gently stirred,
And she was gone.

Nor whistled Evard for
The nonce, so all absorbing grew his work,
Was scarcely to himself recalled, as from
St. Blasien's ivied tower the Angelus
Was rung; thought only how his work progressed.
While, faithful those of Bettlach stood, in home,
In field with bowed head. Felt keen reproof
As there he saw Adora, humbly bowed,
With clasped hands, where she beside
The lattice prayed; then bowed his head, and stood
All reverent, till so softly some one spoke
His name, and 'neath the roses fair stood Bernardine.

"Will you come in? Adora has a wish
To crave, that you our attic occupy,
And store the picture safely there, such time
As not engaged thereon."
He stood again
Beneath Adora's humble roof; he took
Her hand, with many tender words of cheer.
Then as she made her wishes kindly known,
Accepts the proffered room.
Bernardine,
To lead the way, flits like a fairy up
The stairs—flings wide the door—and on
Its threshold waits for him who followed on,
But slower climbed the broken stair; when gained
At last, he found the room a studio
Unique; the rough hewn rafters from the wood
Showed blending rare of thatch and tile.

A window lone, in gable quaintly set,
Let in the softened rays of light, which fell
Through small, round, leaded panes of glass, as still
Are seen in gables old, or cornice odd.
He there the picture quickly brought, and all
That glorious summer afternoon, hung bits
Of ancient armor there, and made the place
With all his sketches bright; op'ed wide
The sash, and let the fragrant roses in,
Which clustered 'round the casement old.
Through days
Of wind and rain, he read, or dreamed the hours
Away o'er book and good cigar, so when
Adora asked the place to see, he brought
Her in his strong arms up, and set her there,
And smiled, well pleased to see her deep delight.
And many hours in that old room they sat
And talked, till twilight fell, and silvery stars
Through casement shown.
Through golden, August days,
Each morning found them busy there within
That shadowy orchard old; the while he with
A rapid pencil drew our Bernardine
Into position fell, of calm unstudied grace,
Of tying still the single vine; she gazed
At him with unconcern, as they conversed
On many themes; or she some ancient lore
Repeated o'er, which Bettlach's elders still
Believe.

Sometimes when lengthened shadows lay
Athwart the fields, she led by devious paths
To places which historic are, or hath
A legend all its own, and there repeat
The old-time tales, which gave them zest.

One day they roamed across the vale,
They climbed the height to Rothberg's ruin grand;[11]
Though but a fragment still remains to speak
The grandeur which hath been. One tower rears
Its battlement above the crumbling pile
Of stone a dreary dungeon was, with but
An entrance at the top; nor any light
Hath pierced its walls, by e'en the smallest trace,
Of loop-hole there; here Rothberg prisoners lay.

And when they with exploring wearied were,
Within some deep embrasure sat, and from
The window viewed the charming scene below,
Which there was spread; far, far as human eye
Can see, one sweep of ripened, waving grain—
Of nestling roofs, umbrageous orchard crowned,
And breadths of shadowy water, calm and still.

There where a broken hearth remains, he saw
L. M., these letters deeply graven in;
Of Bernardine, their meaning asked.
"Ah! 'tis
A legend centuries old, of fair Clarice,
Of Rothberg house, and Leon Montrifiel,
Who dwelt in Lands Krone castle yon, which crowns

The height beyond the Ill. Anton Rothberg,
A feudal lord, once claimed all these wide lands;
'Twas he this castle built, and he parent was
Of fair Clarice, whom Leon loved; but when
The young knight wooing came, and won her heart,
Then of this lord her hand he craved, the stern
Old tyrant loudly swore that ne'er a child
Of his a Montrifiel should wed until
He had his laurels won in war; and bade
Him hence, and when could show a wound, or two,
Or goodly scar, then come, but not before!
Then might he claim the lady's hand, and she
Would wed with him, no fear! She'd faithful bide,
A Rothberg she.
When Leon came one eve,
Farewell to say; for Saxony, that night
He rode, where rankled still some ancient feud.

And as they lingered o'er adieus, and talked
Of what the future held, when he from wars
Returned, should claim her hand; then some fine day
A pageant grand should ride to Lands Krone hall,
Where every homage should be paid to this,
The fairest lady in the land; that life
Henceforth all joy should be.
This boon she craved,
That he upon the lintel there would his
Initials carve; 'though no reminder did she need
Of one so brave.

He drew his poinard from
Its sheath and deeply graved the letters there;
The while the weapon brightly gleamed, where fell
The flashing firelight on the steel, as swift
The yielding stone was cut. "While this remains
I will be true!" he said, then kissed her hand,
And rode away.
Clarice, each morning hung
Fresh blossoms there, and fondly kissed the stone;
Each eve she whispered there, "Good Night!" and sent
A prayer across the gloom, and loving thoughts
For her brave knight, till slowly, lagging days
Grew into months; and then they numbered years;
And still returned he not. Each night Lands Krone
Gave signal thus: "No news!" till hope died out.

Now, sir! this Rothberg dungeon held a knight—
A Saxon prisoner long immured, and he
Was ill, and nigh to death, his keeper said.
The baron swore he'd ne'er relent, till war
And dungeon did its work, to wipe from earth
The hateful horde; gave orders strict, then rode
To war.
One night, in dreams, beside Clarice's
Couch an angel stood, and gravely pointed to
Far Saxony, then disappeared, and in
Its stead the Saxon knight, who whispered low,
"I'll find your prince!" Then she awoke; she 'roused
The jailor from his rest.

"Go bring the knight,"
She said. "Do not demur! My father? He
Will think him dead, and I will shield thee; have
No fear, but do my bidding; do it now!"

O'erhead the windlass loudly creaked, as he
The hempen ladder swift unwound, and to
The rush strewn bottom fell. They from the stones
Upraised the feeble knight, and bore him safe
To blessed air so long withheld; thence through
The starry night to turret high, and on
A silken couch was laid; nor rest, nor peace
Knew fair Clarice, until she brought him back
To health and strength; and then all blindly, and
Alone, his heart had from his keeping gone;
He loved Clarice, he told his love, and plead
His cause right gallantly.
Unfolded then
This maiden's heart; she freely showed him all
Was treasured there; told, too, her dream, again.
She heard his words, "I'll find your prince!"
Then forth
He rode in earnest quest, to castles went,
And sought through many countries strange and new.
Alas! 'twas but a hopeless quest; all sad
And discouraged to his home he went; chanced
One day, in gossip, such as servants will,
He overheard a young, Alsacian knight,
As hostage held, was nigh to death, they said,
And then he knew it was the lost Leon.

He swift unto that dungeon hied, and brought
The dying Leon forth, but tried in vain
To nurse this patient back to health.
"There was no hope," physicians said, and so,
One radiant day, when earth lay hushed in calm
Of Sabbath rest, they started forth.

So tenderly, those henchmen tried and true,
On litter strong, bore him o'er hill, bore him
O'er sunlit dale, all under truce, to home,
In Alsace land; he there enfolded in
His love's dear arms—his weary head upon
Her gentle breast, this brave young knight passed on
Into the silence of the dreamless rest.
And worthless then to him were wounds and scars.

One day there wound to Lands Krone's lordly halls
"A pageant grand," in solemn robes bedight.
Pale as a lily—like the lilies pure,
This Clarice rode beside the flower wreathed bier;
In wide-eyed sorrow, still one picture saw,
A vision which her youthful dreams had wrought—
In years that long had flown.
Then days went by,
With sun and gloom—with seasons' silent change,
Until the years in passing numbered four.
Peace brooded o'er this Rothberg's stately towers,
All hates forgotten now.
The Saxon sued
Again; she sighed, but did not say him nay.

Part Four

Part Four

THIS radiant morn, though all in nature smiled,
The shimmering air with balm o'erladen was—
While overhead were skies of deepest blue.
Between our two was silence and restraint,
As when some sorrow presseth on the heart,
Or anxious care lays finger on the lip
Of joy.
'Though Bernardine still held the vines
And feigned to smile, as fleet her smile as sun
Chased shadows are; within her glorious eyes
Were hid a world of tears unshed. A sigh,
Suppressed, then Evard knew her heart
O'erburdened was.
All tenderly, as if
To grieving child, her hand he took and led
Her forth, to where a glad stream sang its lay;
There sat them down awhile; no words were said,
This silent sympathy its solace brought;
And when her smiles more steadfast grew he spoke:

"My Frauline, wilt tell me this? So long
Have wished to know, yet feared to question thee,
Why thou about St. Blasien's picture keep
The sainted lilies wreathed."

For briefest space
A silence reigned, and o'er her eyes of blue
The white lids trembled down, then lifted were
All glorified with trust.
"I'll tell thee why,"
Said Bernardine. "When first the picture came
The tender, pitying face appealed to me,
And as of old, He drew the humble folk—
Who left their all to follow Him, so was
I drawn, until this blessed, thorn-crowned King
A living presence seemed.
Oft, when methought
My heart must break with weight of woe oppressed—
Too heavy grew to bear—I oft have in
The holy silence knelt and told it all;
Saw pity in that tender face—all blent
With anguish there portrayed—greater far,
Than mortals e'er can know; my burdens of
Such little moment seemed—my sorrows fled—
And I to duty have returned all light
Of heart, with hope renewed, and life once more
Seemed grandly beautiful.
One day I left
A fragrant lily there, it faded not;
So on the morrow others brought, until
It seemed the thing to do.
Belief hath come—
It follows me persistently—that through
This picture, help will come to mine and me;
But how, I do not understand; still it

Hath certain comfort brought, my heart grows light—
The while I tell my sorrows o'er and weave
The scented blossoms there.
Doth smile at me?"
"Not I, indeed! It humbleth me to think
That I the privilege have of comforting
E'en one o'erburdened heart. The Father dear!
Still helping me, will greater assistance prove.
And if at any time should deem that I
Am worthy of such confidence, and thus
Thou wouldst in me confide, this sorrow which
Oppresseth thee, speak only when, and what
Thou wilt, and I will hold it sacred trust."

"A thousand thanks, kind sir! yet not to-day
Will trouble thee with that which blitheth all
My life. I greatly fear that even thou
Cans't naught avail to change stern fate's decree."
In lifted eyes of blue was sorrow's guest,
And welling tears brimmed o'er—in showers fell.

"To-morrow morn begins the hamlet's fest,
It is a sacred day—when to St. Blasien come
From hamlets far—in pilgrimmage—with song—
And prayer—and masses at each altar read;
Thanksgiving 'tis for precious harvest home.
That the dear Father! storm withhold from those
Ungathered still. Wilt please excuse? And may
We hope to see thee there?"
Long mused Evard
When she had gone. He gazed upon his work—

Her picture there—that fair, girl figure 'mid
The vines, whose trusting eyes looked into his,
And in that face, Madonna-like, saw naught
Save purity immaculate. Wave after wave
Of tender pity swept across his soul.

And Bernardine rejoiced, now from her heart
A burden was removed; sped down the road,
St. Blasien ward, to tell her joy before
The Ecce Homo there.
The early morn
Our Evard found within St. Blasien's walls;
And soon across the sun-kissed vale they came—
A gaily, bannered host; first priest and acolyte,
Then followed faithful ones, and in their midst
The maidens clad in robes of snowy white—
In wreath and veil—the blessed Virgin bore.
The monotone of prayer came faintly on
The scented wings of zephyr, borne to him;
And as the shrine they neared, he knew it was
The Rosary. He entered, too, within the shrine
And humbly knelt upon the broken floor.

The service done—the banners homeward borne—
And sitting there upon the mouldering wall—
Which Gotte's acre, there enclosed, Evard
Drank in the melody of happy song,
Still by the truant breezes brought to him,
Till fainter grew the sound, and all was still.
Out from the hamlets 'mid the hills glad bells
Rang out their welcoming to rest, to home.

That morn, in blissful idleness, those two
Sat 'neath the shade. "Too indolent for work,"
Thus Evard said, and laid his pallette 'mong
The clover blooms, and in his hand his brushes
He idle held, while Bernardine and he within
The cooling shadow sat and converse held,
As on that morn so long ago.
Adora, where
She from the lattice forth smiled on those two,
And playful shook her head of silver gray,
And pointed to the easel oft, and vines,
Which 'mid the clover lay; of no avail.
They smiled, as sometimes wayward children will,
But idled still.
In accents low and sweet,
Our Bernardine told then the story of her life.
'Twas filled with such exquisite tenderness,
This earth no sadder hath.
'Twas much the same
As this we know, the housefrau, told so long
Ago at twilight hour; with pathos all
Her own, spoke of Emile, how he had toiled,
The while denied himself of comfort all,
The mother might not want, till now his health
Was gone.
She, too, had helped all that she could
From early morn till dewy eventide;
Had toiled afield; but what one mark per day,
On which they two must live? Since he had come

His largess had so many comforts brought,
And, too, Emile, could now be warmer clothed.

"Oh, sir!" with pleading hands she turned to him;
"Doth know what 'tis to hunger day after day,
And hunger still for but one glimpse of face—
One little glimpse! of one that's gone; with such
Desire, woulds't gladly give life's fullest years,
For that one glance so brief; or for the tone
Of dear remembered voice, through lagging years,
Till burden hath too heavy grown—must still
Be borne? 'Twas then this picture came, and from
The first, 'twas heaven sent to comfort me.

But the Adora, patient soul! hath not
This comfort of your picture had. Her son,
With ardent longings, she desires to see
Once more; poor hungered heart!"
"Oh! would that I
Had earlier known of this, no obstacle
Too great had been; we should have found a way.
Emile shall come! Bring his address; I'll write
At once, and bear the missive o'er the line
To Switzerland."
He wrote. "Thy mother old
Is longing for her son, and she is ill.
Cross thou the line, needs't have no fear! I'll meet
Thee 'mid the larches on the hill; the hour
Is six on Thursday eve, so do not fail."

Then Bernardine her signature affixed,
Of authenticity a guarantee;
He gold enclosed, and bore it safe across the line.
And then the mother must be told the joy
In store; o'erjoyed was she.
"Emile, Emile!
And I shall see my child once more? Dear God!
Too much of joy this is." Then as a babe
She prattled on—what she would say—what she
Would do; then came a change.
"What this portend?
Maybe, it was bringing him to prison or
To death! What would not they, those Gendarmes, do?
No, no! he must not come; oh, stay him now!
'Tis not too late! and yet—and yet—I want
My boy." Evard, to this dear mother's heart
Assurance brought; at last, in higher hands,
She rested all, to wait this coming home.

A broad highway, across the fertile fields,
To Linchdorf leads, a hamlet in the vale;
This way is bordered, too, with wheat, o'erarched
With fruitful boughs, with here and there beside
The way a tangle wild, convolvuli,
And fragrant vines; in whose unfathomed depths
Of loveliness one might a shelter find
From storm and wind.
Here crucifixes, too, beside
The way, amid the wheat are set; en mass

Are blue forget-me-nots, and purple thyme,
With which crude inscription is o'ergrown—
Which one must put aside if they would read;
And then the shimmering air is rife with balm.

A lonely road; one ne'er might stranger meet,
Outside this hidden, sleepy town, set 'mid
The fields, knee deep with grass and bloom—
And spreading orchards old; and 'tis so like.
To Bettlach, too, one scarce would know 'twas not
The same, or maybe fragment broken off,
A lodgment found within the valley fair;
Or, better still, a peasant child gone by
Itself, to play awhile, in quiet there.

The same old homes in disarray, the same
Carnations massed in bloom; a merry stream
Comes leaping down, its purpose picturing
As it goes; the wheel of olden mill.
It turns, then lazy lies 'neath willow shade,
Where on the polished stones, an old, old frau,
Her homespun linens wash; the while you pass
She gives "Good day!" and smiles, then bends unto
Her task again; but in her eyes one reads—
"Would I, like thee, might have a holiday."

Amid the fields, outside this drowsy town,
The most pretentious house of all is kept
As Inn, and there, above the door, a sign
In iron wrought, of two crossed keys, swings in
The breeze; here dwelt Johannes Habiteur,

And sister Bertha, still unwed—a vixen, she!
In scanty measure is her meanness shown;
She grudges e'en the wine the kreutzers bring
Which she rakes in, and grumbles loud should one,
Perchance, but linger long o'er pipe and mug.

And yet she as a shining angel is
Beside Johannes; he hath with much intrigue,
And hoarded gold, full many a trusting maid
Ensnared, who mistake saw, too late, alas!
And wealth ill-gotten, too, is his, of which
No one has ever known, for graves speak not,
And they have lain for years in Tsessor wood.

All wrapped in self Johannes was; still to
His credit be it said, he truly loved
Our Bernardine with all the ardor he
Possessed; he followed her persistently
With proffers of his name; but Bernardine
Would naught of him, or of his wealth, and well
He knew who came between him and desire.

And thus beside the hedge row oft he hid
And kept an eye on Bernardine, and tried
To catch what they might say, beneath the bougns
Of laden, orchard trees; a sentence caught—
Sometimes a word, when winds were right; alas!
That they too freely spoke of Thursday eve,
And whom would come; in frantic glee he sped
Away, and yet he had not heard it all.

One dweller there in Bettlach was Maurice;
A poor, demented one who dwelt alone
In hovel rude, where want stood sentinel.
"This world is out of sorts," he said; it was
His task to right the wrong, but there were ghosts,
That came between; full many nights, in vain,
He spent to oust them from this hovel old.
Ofttimes was seen his taper's gleam, where they
In loft a lodgment found, or in the stalls,
For refuge sought and grinned at him, till night,
All shuddering was with curses loud, and yet—
Like Hamlet's ghost, they would not down.
To him,
Evard unwelcome was; the picture which
He worked upon was, too, a ghost, and oft
A missile slyly hurled fell close, until
Evard, no more would he endure; he then
That ghostly precinct entered in, and then
He soundly shook Maurice, who filled with fear,
All promise made, became an abject slave
Unto Evard. This Thursday afternoon
Of which we write, Evard had met Maurice,
And to him did this secret plan unfold:
At dusk, Maurice should 'neath the tangles creep,
Which lay beside the Linchdorf way, and there
Till midnight sleep, when ghosts were out; then would
Evard arouse Maurice, who fleeing down
The dim highway, should circle once about
The vines, the Burgomaster's vineyard there;

That he must utter ne'er a word, though pressed
Most close; then home to bed, when all the ghosts
Would loose themselves, so trouble him no more.
Maurice a faithful promise made. Evard
Well knew he would not fail.
A broad highway
Of Roman make, lies boldly 'crost this fair
Alsacian land; 'twas built in time of Christ,
So legend saith, can still be plainly traced,
In woodlands where great fir trees grow, but in
The fields encroaching plows reduce this width.

Late on this Thursday afternoon a man,
Still young, of medium height, drags o'er
This Roman way; this peasant wears the garb of France.
Since early morn o'er many leagues through France
Hath come; he rests him oft, where friendly screen
Of odor'us boughs shut out the view; but walks
With nervous haste across the meadows brown
And sere, until the larches gained at last,
Exhausted sinks upon the moss, o'ercome—
Nor wakes until the signal whistle thrice
Is given; then cautiously the boughs unclasp—
A swift inquiry speaks from eye to eye;
Then hand meets hand, and thus forever more
There is a bond of friendship sealed.
The while
The one of food partook, this plan Evard
Did there unfold: "Soon as night's mantle wraps
The plain, proceed thou to the domicile;

Till midnight thou art there secure. I with
The guards a watch will keep in Tsessor wood;
When we return at midnight hour, if all
Is well, will whistle bar of 'Home, Sweet Home.'
But should a shriller whistle hear, then fly!
Beyond the orchard hedge, a tangle lies;
Within, a space prepared, one may securely hide.
I'll meet thee there. I to mislead the guards
Have planned; have not a fear, leave all to me."

"'Tis day, so long! oh, will it never end?"
Adora questioned many times, the while
She said her Rosary, to fill the hours
Which still must pass e'er he for whom
She yearned could come.
And Bernardine, she, too,
Oft westward turned. Was lingering sunset e'er
Like this? There low on the horizon's rim
The golden orb stood still, as if command
Of second Joshua had bid it stand.

Like joy and sorrow, each must have an end—
The sun went down; still fondly lingered day
In crimson west.
Still on the streets, in groups
The social peasants stood and smoked their pipes,
And gossiped late; another eve they long
Ere this had been abed. The children, too,
Were shouting at their play; they should have couched

At set of sun, or like the lambs at eve,
Had hurtled to the fold; and still they played,
And shouted loudly at their hare and hounds.

This night they in a luxury indulged;
Long e'er the light had paled in western sky—
The taper gleamed—for she would see his face,
Adora said, the instant he might come.
Belated toilers, home returning saw
The feeble light, and told their waiting wife:
"Adora must be worse," they said, "The cot
Seemed all ablaze with light."
Worn matron said, to conscience ease, the morn
She'd send a bowl of broth, or flask of wine,
To strengthen her; then fell asleep.
As hand
In hand they in silence sat—those two
Lone watchers there, intent to catch the first
Faint sounds of coming steps of him they loved.
The lagging moments brought no faintest sound.

"He will not come!" Adora said, and then
The silent teardrops coursed their way and fell
Upon the clasping hands. "Patience, dear heart!"
Said Bernardine, "He'll surely come!"
"Nay, nay!
The hour grows late! the letter failed to reach
Him there; maybe they have arrested him!
Dear God! be Thou merciful," aloud
Adora prayed.

"Do not despair, there no
Commotion was upon the street, we should
Have heard! And, too, the Herr has not returned—
He said he would—Emile not there."
"Oh, list!
A footstep now! Go to the lattice, love!"
When Bernardine into the darkness peered,
Saw only gloom—and caught no sound, save chirp
Of cricket lone, out in the night and gloom.

Night's tender clasp stole 'round the sleeping world;
Then velvet darkness 'mid the larches fell—
Where screened amid the odorous branches stood,
Emile, refreshed. He watched the landscape fade
In night; now may he safely venture forth.
Soft from St. Blasien's rang the Angelus—
They rung it late that night.
Then struggling up
The steep ascent, the sound of loaded wain—
That into distance softly droned away.
Then as a benediction, voices came,
In accents low, "Schlaf wohl, schlaf wohl!" stole up
To him, like cadence of an organ's tone.

Along the highway peered Emile; no one
In sight; he crouched beside the thyme-fringed banks,
Then like a shadow sped adown a path—
All hid amid the evergreens; how well
He knew! he'd roved it oft with Bernardine.

And then upon the startled night a sound
Of footsteps fell; supine 'mid heather lay
Emile, till sound of sabots died away:
'Twas but the late return of one who toiled;
A weary gatherer of wood. But why,
This night of all?
Then upon winged feet,
He fled the wood, then home, and peering through
The lattice there, he saw the two who sat
In silence tense; 'twas then to Bernardine
The mother spoke; she to the lattice went
To look; he raised the latch and entered in.

A joyful cry, the three were clasped in bond
Of perfect bliss—with kisses warm—and glad love light—
Which looked from joyful eyes, through tender tears,
And found an answering gladness there expressed
In other eyes. Hath yonder home, with all
Its glory told, a statelier joy than this?

Part Five

Part Five

THE genial guards were Evard's warmest friends,[12]
Of his own age; ah! many a jaunt had they
In field and wood; full many hours they whiled
Away in sheltered hut of woven boughs,
Amid the screening evergreens safe hid;
Where through the vistas they might view the far
Highway, and pounce on all who passed; mayhap!
A smuggler 'mid the lot; none ever came!
But, should they chance to capture one, it meant
Full forty marks be added to their meager
Pay.

They begged of him that he would go
With them this Thursday eve on early watch,
In Tsessor wood; he faithful promise gave,
If not too wearied with his task, and well
He knew he would not be, he'd meet them there;
The hour was eight, he would the usual
Signal give, two whistles low, prolonged.

Thus, when he parted with Emile he took
His way across the field, and loitered as
The long day slowly waned, to time the hour,
At Tsessor wood; arriving there he gave
The signal twice; forth from the wild wood stole

The guards to welcome him; then questioned they
If he their officer had seen? He gave
A negative reply; they hied them to
The wayside Inn, and merry made o'er rich,
Old wine, with which Evard their glasses filled.

But when the hour drew on toward ten,
Betook them then with stool and plaid within[13]
The wood, and dozed until a footstep stole
Along the road, and then the guards were all alert.
"Ach, hist! bide here whilst we investigate."
Then forth they fared into the road, where low
The trio conference held; but Evard, 'mid
The shadows hid, bits of their converse caught.
"Across the line! Adora's house!" and then!
He knew Emile betrayed.
He flung their plaids,
Far in the gloom; and when all eager they
Returned, they searched in vain, so must
Resort to flint and steel, while Evard slept,
Or feigned, and when aroused he questioned them.
"Was it midnight, and must they home?"
"Ah, no!
But urgent business called them there." Then out
Upon the white highway, and thus toward home —
Through holy, starlit night they went, Evard
Was ill at ease; he greatly feared some one,
Had careless been—a light, maybe? Nay, nay!
They had more sense than that!

Some wild bird in
Her nest disturbed, made bitter plaint. Evard,
With whistle shrill, disturbed her more; 'twas but
A ruse, for as Adora's cot they neared
A bar of light lay 'cross the road.
And then,
Another note—'twas gone; but Henning sprang
Toward the door, and Seiter, clearing at
A bound, the paling at the rear, and those
Within were prisoners.
"In heaven's name,
What doth this mean?" he asked; they simply said,
"A renegade."
"Who's there?" from Bernardine within.
"Evard! Delay not, but ope the door; no harm
Shall come to thee; 'tis some mistake!" The bolts
Withdrawn—the door stood wide—a light—and there,
In plainest sight was Emile's hat. Evard,
With cloak in rapid swish, that light lay on
The floor. "Oh, pardon, Henning!" Evard said.
The flame renewed, he taper gave, and then,
Telltale hat in corner, 'neath mantle was.

They searched each nook in vain, Emile had gone.
In pretense, Evard ever led the way—
More eager searched than they; soon shouted, "Here
He is!" aroused Maurice, who frightened fled—
Toward Linchdorf, adown the road; the two
Gave chase, loud clanked their sabers as they ran.

Evard sought out Emile, to waiting ones—
Bade him return. "Art safe till three, then cross
The line, there safety lies." The sly Maurice
Soon sought his couch—the two that vineyard searched
Till dawn, and Evard watched beside the door;
Emile, in Switzerland, asleep, so near
To Bettlach border 'tis, dreamed o'er the hours
Which just had passed.
Those three united ones
Had sat in sweet converse, and planned
For future days. The good Adora gave
Consent that France, henceforth, should be her home,
And he would soon be well again, beneath
A mother's watchful care; their home would be
A vine-wreathed cot, Emile knew of the very one,
Then life would be unbroken joy.
And they
Would go, Adora said, as soon as snow
Was gone; yea! when the earliest daffodil
On Alsace's sunny meads appeared; 'twas then
The whistle sounded shrill, and converse died.

As when the passing of an argosy,
A peace and silence settles o'er the deep;
So in Adora's home the same routine
Of life went on. Again the mornings found Evard
At work beneath the bending orchard boughs;
And Bernardine still tied the vines; but in

Her eyes so beautiful, a strange, new look,
Of hope restored, was there; and all in vain
Did Evard strive to reproduce that light
So glad.
That which God paints upon the heart,
Shall man with pigments crudest fix upon
A canvas woven from the earth?
"He works
Upon the texture coarse of peasant garb,"
Thought Bernardine, and thus forgetful quite
Of self, she walked in fields Elysian oft;
The while Evard, despair at heart, strove there
To paint that light divine. "This shall not thwart
Me now," he thought. "But to my will it must
Subservient be; this light shall reproduce,
Or trying never cease."
At last upon
The canvas there it stood transfixed. Hath seen
The winter boughs bend 'neath their snowy weight?
And then the genial sun with touch divine—
And lo! the drooping boughs are lifted all—
Till forth it stands—with greater strength because,
This weight it bore.
And lifted now this weight
Of deep despair, his surcharged heart leaped forth—
In loftier joy, than had desired results,
With usual effort gained; now stood they there,
The living and the pictured one; if each
Had spoken, no surprise had brought.

"Wilt come,
My frauline, now and see?" Back from her sweet
Day dreams she came; down slipped the vines amid
The dew, quick to his side she drew, and was
Surprised no change to find, and asked if aught
Were wrong, or finished quite? Could see
No changes made.
"The eyes! my dear frauline!
Hath noted them?" Then wonder grew—then speech
At length. "Hath eyes of mine a look like this?"

"Not now! but they have had since that glad eve
Emile was here, and I have striven sore
To fix it on the waiting canvas here,
And thus would I all homage pay to Him
Who crowneth worthy effort with success.
Be victory what it may, 'tis heaven sent."

The picture its completion neared; this morn
Was to have been the last, but vigil held
Beside the couch where good Adora lay;
As she was starting, journey far, but not
For France.
Resigned was she—sent tender word,
To her Emile, and blessed our two, who there
So tearful knelt; with hand on either head
She passed away. Death, death, how beautiful
Thou art when coming thus!

With tender tears
Laid her to rest amid the blooms, beside
St. Blasien's ivied walls; and o'er the mound
Of freshened earth an iron crucifix
They reared to her, and left her with her God.

Now at this time, Johannes found it oft
Convenient most to cross the fields where some
Of Bettlach's toilers were; of harvest and
The weather spoke—then of Adora passed
Away. "Did know what Bernardine would do?
Now quite alone was she." An interest in
The picture feigned. "Was finished yet?" he asked.
"They had his wishes for success; but did
They think it quite the thing for one so young
As Bernardine with man so intimate
To be, and let him paint her as he would?"

Then oft some plain faced matron said, "She wished
She might this chance have had;" held serious face
'Neath smothered laugh.
And sometimes wrinkled dames,
With tears, spoke the blessing that this had been;
That Bernardine could earn while caring for
The suf'ring one. This gold had comforts brought—
And luxuries, to them unknown before,
Had smoothed Adora's pathway to the tomb.
Thus meager satisfaction gained, he would

In shame—with hanging head, go on his way;
But in his heart, ambitious still to her
Possess e'en 'gainst her will.
At times he found
Success among the males—who jested oft—
As some men will—they guyed relentlessly.

Thus fancy o'er judgment gained control.
To natures such as his, the possible
Stood proven facts. The Burgomaster one
Day led him on, till he committed stood;
Thus, what insinuations were before
Now stood in words expressed.
And then a sound
Berating he received. "Thou vulgar wretch!"
The Burgomaster cried. "Dost know our maidens chaste
As altar lilies are, or stainless snow?
And she, the orphaned one, is purest of
Them all; one need but look within her eyes
To read the angel there, and give thy words
The foulest lie. For shame! Thy words give o'er
Or, by the gods, come in our midst again
And thou shalt rue it; dost thou hear?"
And this
Sufficed, he evermore in public held
A silent tongue. Ah! there are those who that
Assail which they themselves have naught to lose.

Still in his heart it rankled sore; he then
Laid cunning wait for Bernardine, and forced
His loathsome presence oft—with proffers she

So oft had spurned; all this annoyance keen
To her who sorrowed o'er her recent loss;
And knew that in the future near there still
A parting sad must come; softly apace
The warning shadows fell.
No more they worked;
The picture grand within the schoolroom stood
Complete, and opened to the public view;
And soon, alas! the restless seas would roll
Between, and sunder far, this helpful friend.

At last the longed for gala day had come;
There in the school the finished picture hung,
In rich, warm hues of olive draped, such as
It value gave; and then from early Mass
The eager peasants gladly came and stood
About the door, all wonder-eyed, or sat
In silent groups and viewed this gem of art
As there displayed.
"Ach, Gott! 'tis Bernardine
Herself!" one said, then ran this whisper through
The throng, that she before a background stood—
Had hung the draperies to deceive; and each
One owned it was a clever ruse; then each
Face wore a knowing smile.
When Bernardine
Stood in the door, they looked again, amazed;
One asked Evard how thing like this might be,
That pigments crude were flesh and blood?
Declared the picture breathed, he knew it did.

Each looked their fill, and went their way, but came
Again, and each time found some beauty new.
Then word went forth; from near and far they came,
By twos and threes, as children come when school
Is done.

Each fresh arrival brought some kin,
To whom must all be pointed out again,
Until Evard, as one who keepeth guard, to hold
Them back—so close they pressed, e'er horny hands
Destruction wrought.

He then explained it all,
Till e'en the denser ones of Bettlach knew
The all there was to learn, of technique—tone—
Of color—value, too; most pleased was he
When day was done; they locked the door and left
It there. The next day saw it on its way
To gay Paris. Then laid aside all work
And care; Evard would rest a week or so
Before he said adieu.

For Bernardine
He would provide e'er he should go. Each door
For her a welcome held; she much preferred
This cot she long had called her home. They found
An old and homeless one to share this cot
With Bernardine; it was the first, in years
And years, Sophia knew the meaning true
Of "Home, Sweet Home," that word to hearts most dear.

'Twas midnight hour, when wrapped in slumber most
Profound the hamlet lay. Aroused from sleep
By one who at his casement called his name,
So gently came, "Evard, Evard!" it with
His dream was blent; he peering forth beheld
His friend, who stood beneath.
"Forgive," he said,
"The night so glorious is, wilt care to come
On watch with us?" And soon within the low,
Old room of Henning's home, they stood within
The glow of blazing twigs, whilst they partook
Of coffee hot and strong e'er they set forth.

Fantastic figures, born of flame, rout all
The darkness from each nook, while 'gainst the wall
The shadows grotesque of giants tall,
The faces bronzed, wore deeper dye; it shone
On sabers there; its brief life o'er it left
In deeper gloom the place.
They sallied forth
In night, through silent wood—by secret paths—
As silent they—with every sense alert,
The faintest sound of trodden twig to catch,
Should any outlaw chance to be abroad.

Through drooping boughs, so softly interlaced,
Lay woven patterns on the velvet moss;
While here and there, in open glade it lay
In patches calm and broad.

The beeches all
So motionless, were dreams, yea! symphonies
In white were they; as if a Phidias
Had graven them in marble pure.
But soon
A highway lay before; and when it neared
The border line they turned aside beneath
The firs, where all the shadows of the wood
Were keeping tryst; their plaids upon the moss
They spread, and soon the guards were fast asleep;
And lost to care which irksome duties bring.

Against the lichened bole of ancient fir
A lounging place for Evard made; and there
He yielded him to peaceful, dreamy thoughts,
Which came and went at their sweet will; e'en as
The flick'ring moonbeams played across the face
Of sleeping friends, and wove their wond'rous weft
In dreams of far homeland—of youthful hope—
And manhood strangely blent; and through it all
There smiled one face—the face of Bernardine.

Then in transcendant glory's flash this stood
Revealed: he loved the orphaned Bernardine.
His heart leaped forth in extatic joy,
Which filled each sense in bliss. "My Bernardine!
My Bernardine!"
Transformed, this universe
One crystal orb of light appeared, where he
Henceforth should walk all hand in hand with this

Sweet woman of his choice. All that which mars
The perfect peace—the beauty of this life—
Afar had flown, and in its stead there stood
The smiling angel of abiding joy.

As in dissolving views one sees the hues
Swift changing with the changing scene, the eyes
Which looked in his were brown, and in the face
A look of pain as one who suffers much.
This face is of his friend Emile, framed in
With larches cool and dim as on that night
Upon the hill. The shock of this awakening rude,
Keen as a dagger thrust it came, and bowed
His soul in deepest grief, the while he fought
A conflict sore—fought out in dry-eyed woe;
At last he stood a conqueror.
Should he
Unto another yield this wealth of bliss?
Its import unto each the same. This all
Absorbing love unsought had come to him;
Its regal growth had been a subtle thing
Of tender germ he naught had known until
It stood as fragrant bloom uplifted to
The sun.
And loving her, it duty was
From want and woe to shield her evermore;
To fill her days with plenty's richest store
And cherish her until the end.

And what to him Emile, this peasant one?
Why yield this rarest prize? It certain was

That one must lose, why not Emile?
For all his life had hardship been, and one
Of want and disappointment sore, and thus
To sorrow be inured.
Emile should have
His chance; the odds against him this he knew,
For he ne'er yet had failure met in that
He undertook; nor should the feelings of
A common peasant bear the slightest weight
In such matters of the heart.
But how would she
Receive this knowledge, when he told her of
His love? As 'twas with him, a waking glad—
Like glorious light of heaven breaking through
The mists of earth? Or would in sorrow from
Him turn, and cling unto her earlier love?

Nay, nay! such thoughts, he would not harbor them;
And why perplex him o'er a future dim?
Its hidden store, it would reveal. All bright
The love lit present was.
He musing watched
The moonbeams, o'er the sleeping Henning's face,
In softened, silver splendor come and go;
In vain all earnest strivings were to reach
That well beloved face, which came through all
His earlier visions smiling, with its rare
And girlish grace; instead, this other came,
With all the pathos of its pleading shown—
A silent pleading, all its own.

Then his
Better nature—self asserting 'rose,
And pointed with unerring finger to
His faultless past; and spotless there were all
The pages spread; dishonor ne'er had known—
Had yielded not in thought or deed; should he
Become its plaything now? Or swerve he
From his chosen path? Nay, though the heavens o'er
Him passed away!
There 'round him fell
The shadow of the yearning, summer night;
Beside him, too, his friends still soundly slept
And dreamed, unconscious of this conflict sore;
Nor knew the friend who sat beside them
Wore on his brow the purple diadem
With which stern sorrow crowns his victims all.

And still they slept, their softened breathing made
A rhythm in the night, yet he felt alone
And lonely, as one from the world withdrawn.
And his hopes, erstwhile so buoyant, lay
Like ancient shattered lute, o'er which the dust
Of fallen years lie gray. Well, let them rest!
Life hath its waking, care and duty close
Allied, which speaks with voice we cannot still;
Till life grows fevered with endeavor, yet
We leave unfinished and unsatisfied
The tasks before us set.
Toward Emile
His heart grew tender now. To suffer makes

Us all akin. Should, then, he add one tithe
Of grief to this o'erburdened heart? whose guests,
Grim want and hardship, stood beside him close?

And thus at last he 'rose victorious,
Triumphant over self and wrong desire.
The shimmering moonbeams o'er him wove
Of light an aureole.
Think what this means!
For one brief hour to know the rapturous dream—
The blest effulgence of full orbed day—
Of all absorbing joy, when heaven seems
Through all the bending, azure dome to break.
Here at thy feet the rose lit vistas spread,
And at thy side, thy heart's ideal, sent
From God above.
Clasp close this pure,
White lily to thy heart, drink its perfume,
'Tis thine, 'tis thine forever more! life holds
Its fullest largess now, nor can there be
Desire more.
Then yield this treasure up;
To watch all beauty—brightness fade away—
The light die out—a sudden darkness fall
Where day erstwhile hath reigned.
This sad earth still
Hath its Gethsemane, where we alone
Must agonize, for there are none with us
To watch one little hour; such he had known.

Could ever life be as it was before?
Or aught to ease this heart, with its new woe
Oppressed? For souls like his but once with love
May burn. When love hath vanished, and sweet hope
Is dead, it cometh never more. Oh, years!
Long years, which spread so desolate before.

To such as he when duty's way is plain—
Or task however difficult is set,
He followeth unswerving, 'though its course
Most devious may be.
Thus never once,
By word or sign, would he betray this friend,
Whose most implicit trust was his. This gem
Of beauty rare, as shrined within his heart
For aye; and memory's stainless lilies white
Would wreath about it there; and she of all
This world most dear—his soul's affinity—
His Bernardine, ne'er must she know, and not
One thought must e'er disturb her life's serenity.
Had he not deemed her ever, as unto
Another wed, its consummation he
Would hasten, and their waiting have an end.
And still, his heart cried out in anguish sore,
"My Bernardine, My Bernardine!"

Through all the night's soft, silver silence, sung
In moonlight far away, came night birds' notes,
With its entrancing melody, and yet,
We name it pain, and wounded memory.

Heart be still! in silence bear thy woe;
Art not alone.
From other lives the light and joy hath flown,
Souls there are, who keener anguish know
Yet make no moan.

Heart be still! yield not in thy despair,
These may abide.
E'en though desired gift hath heaven denied,
Mayhap in these had found some base alloy,
And pleasure died.

Heart be still! yeild not in thy despair,
Is hope effaced?
What though thy life be as a desert waste?
For roselit dawns, and golden eves are there,
And moonbeams chaste.

Heart be still! our Father knoweth best.
Shall puny man
The wisdom question of His perfect plan?
Heaven alone hath peace, and perfect rest,
Trust thou again.

Then came the angelus, from out the vale,
So softly stealing 'cross the wood, awoke
The sleepers from their dream, and starts them up—
All wonder eyed, "'Tis morn! and have we slept?
How stupid this! and thou Evard?"
"Ah! I
Have dreamed, and I have wakened," answer made.

Their plaids were rolled, and sabers buckled on,
They took their homeward way across the fields,
Where folded blossoms slept in glittering dew.
Uprose the sun, and lo! the songsters roused
The echoes of the wood.
Up from the vale
The blue smoke curling told the hamlet was
Astir, as to their labor peasants haste,
All life to them one round of toil.

Part Six

Part Six

ACROSS fields, where pale the stubble gleams,
With ruthless feet sere autumn calmly walked;
Belated blossoms drooped their heads and fell
Asleep, drew near the resting season of the year;
And as the snowy daisies, each had dropped
Their petals, one by one, so silently
The moments passed till all the peaceful days
Were numbered quite—the last of Evard's stay
Had come.
That morn the postman, hastening on
His daily round, a letter brought which bore
The stamp of France. Emile was ill it said,
He long had ailing been—had managed still
His task; now since his mother's death
His health had given quite away, and he
Must to another yield his place. As he
Was friendless quite, would Evard kindly to
This case attend?
Beneath the embowered porch
Sat Bernardine alone; no roses were
In bloom, their fragrant petals, every one,
Had with the summer's bloom and sweetness flown;
The sprays which drooped above her wore
The autumn's changing hues.

All flowerlike
When autumn frost hath kissed, she seemed.
The filmy lace which from the needles fell,
Was jewelled thick with tears. As moments passed
Of this the saddest day of all to her,
Must each be filled; both hand and brain must now
Be taxed, or else the surcharged heart must break;
Evard, with missive, found her thus.

Her tear wet eyes she raised to him. "Not yet?"
She said, "Say not the hour hath come to bid
Farwell."
"Nay, Bernardine! but thou
This letter read; 'tis of Emile," and as
She read, the present sorrows all were drowned
In anxious fear.
"Take heart, my dear! we shall
Find means to succor him."
Then briefest space
He pondered deep; at length he asked, "Could not,
We bring him here? Where mid his childhood scenes
He sooner must regain the health that's failed?"
All eagerness was Bernardine at once.
With hope restored, the brightness to her eyes
Returned; and in her face the rosy hue
Amid the lilies brightly bloomed again.

"This very day, for him we'll go!" she said,
"This hour, at once we'll start! we'll bring him here,
And he shall have his mother's room, where she

So often prayed for him; while we, in love,
Anticipate his every want and wish;
And speedily shall we his health restore.
Oh, say! cannot we go for him at once?"

"Nay! bide till morn, of preparation there
Is need e'er we can leave; the cot must first
In readiness be placed, its guest to hold.
For I may not return; shall see thee safe
With Emile across the line; toward home
Then haste thy steps, for I have lingered all
Too long."

They sat to work; soon 'neath their hands
The cot all spotless was, and on the walls
The burnished copper gleamed, and everywhere
The linen white and cleanly odor breathed.
The trailing vines and rich autumn blooms,
With clustered berries red, made bright that room;
So trifling is the touch that brightens homes
Which meager comfort hath.

All was in readiness
For him, whose second coming meant a rest
And health renewed. The long day waned from sight—
The broad fields faded quite, and Bernardine
Thanked God the weary day at last was done.

Again amid the gloaming shadows sat
This little band, about guard Henning's door—
Where they so oft, in converse sat, with song

And cheer, through golden, summer eves now flown.
They ne'er again shall gather thus through all
The years to come.
As one, who wandering through
The woodland ways, finds in October late
A bloom, one lone, frail violet—to know
Twill be the very last of all the year,
How tenderly he gathers it, drinks in
Its fragrance, and rejoiceth more than o'er
All springtime violets. And thus to these
Fond friends this last sad eve more precious was
Than all that went before. Mirth died on lips—
And voices grew subdued, as converse took
The retrospect, and then recalled those days
Just gone; what they had been—what they had held,
Ah! ne'er again could summer hold so much
Of joy for either one.
'Twas then Evard
Bethought him of Emile. "Oh, by the way!
My friends! Emile is ill, poor lad! he has
Been ailing long, still managed he his share
Of toil. Now since his mother's death he hath
His courage lost, the shock has been severe
And he has taken to his couch, and so
Must be removed to where he can receive
The proper care; at morn, with Bernardine,
I leave for France, and she will bring him home.
If tender care can ought avail he'll soon
Be well again. What thinketh thou of this?"

"That thou without thy host hath reckoned; here
Emile must suffer an arrest, immediate,
Were he to cross the line; his lot with France
Was cast, and ill or well must by this choice
Abide."
"If such the case, I must at once make haste
To Bernardine, our present plans to change.
Poor soul! a disappointment this, most sore,
Will be. And thou my friends! say, shall I see
Thee e'er I go? Or art off to duty e'er
I wake."
"We're off for Tsessor wood at break
Of day. Farewell! Farewell!" Then hands unclasp,
To touch, ah! nevermore, through all the years.

A stillness falls on all the night; a peace
Most precious to soul of Bernardine,
As there she sits alone and dreams sweet dreams
Of what the morn may bring. There's not one thing
That's left undone—the final touch hath all
Received.
Outside a step—the lifted latch —
Then Habiteur steps boldly in the room.
A light is brought, and then she sees who this
Intruder is; 'tis not the first since she
Alone hath been. He knows how hopeless is his case—
One trial more, and each to be the last;
Persistent still he came? "Thou Habiteur?
Canst say what dost thou here, this hour so late?"

"Came once more thy hand to crave; thou wilt
To love me learn, my sweet frauline! my life
Without thee hath no charm for me. See! all
My wealth I pour it at thy feet—with all
These gems I deck thee now. Gold, gold! take all;
And I thy slave will be. If thou wilt with
Me wed, thou ne'er another hour of care
Or toil shall know—each wish be gratified.
Oh! say not nay."
And oh! so gently then
Did Bernardine bid him retain his gold.
"It tempts me not," she said, "My heart—my hand
I pledged long years agone to my Emile;
And in this heart for other loves there is
No room; and knowing this, if I should wed
Or sell myself to thee for gold and gems,
Couldst thou still hold me in respect, were I
A thousand times thy wife? nay! false were I
To my Emile, could I be true to thee?
With this be satisfied; it cannot be.
In God's dear name, no more annoy.
Silence
Fell, a hopeless look Johanne's face o'erspread—
Till arch fiend whispered at his ear, and then
Despair gave place to cunning thought. "Emile,
If safe removed, would there be hope for me?"

"What meanest thou?"
"Well, only this! Emile,
So long from thee away hath lost his love

For thee; and other maidens found who most
Congenial are, and so would gladly be
Well rid of thee. Tis nought, all men are thus!
Now if thou lovest him as thou dost claim,
Would gladly grant him his release, and for
His happiness this sacrifice would make.
Do this, and I will him at once endow
With many thousand franks, that he may dwell
Abroad; then we will wed, my Bernardine!"
"This tempts me not, nor will I Emile release
Unless perchance he bid me thus to do."

She noted well the triumph gleaming in
The face of Habiteur. "Nay, nay!" she said,
But I must hear it from his lips, nor will
A written word suffice."
"Deluded thou!
Not for one moment think Emile with thee
Will wed. Dost know what people speak of thee?
That all hath not been well 'tween thee and this
American; and here thy chance is lost.
What sacrifice I make with thee to wed!"

"Discuss not farther, pray, this subject now.
Depart in peace; may heaven's blessings rich
Bestrew thy way. Good night! and farewell!
With Herr Evard I go to meet Emile."

This homely room, Adora, oft by prayer
Made holy place—resounded now with oaths,

L of C.

And curses deep. "Remember, this, I say!
What I have seen ———"

A warning hand she raised,
"Yes thou hast seen! and I have oft been told
That ever thou wast hidden 'neath our hedge.
Had I this fact but mentioned to Herr Evard
Then thou hadst left the place with broken head.
Yes thou hast seen! and doth not this suffice?
Thou knowest best how false thy accusations are,
So I will leave this matter in the dear,
Kind Father's hands. The door ajar! Now go!"

Once more alone; and standing there was she
With meekly folded hands; she breathed a prayer
For help, and strength to bear this cruel thrust.
"E'en this shall not disturb the calm—the joy
Of my full heart, which hath such royal guests,
My God, and my Emile," this she resolved.
And then as if to cleanse each lingering trace,
Sang sweet and low, this German air.

"Sei stark mein herz, ertrage still
Der seele tiefes leid;
Denk, dass der Herr es also will
Der fesselt und befreit.

Und trauf dich seine hand auch schwer
In demuth nimm es an;
Er liegt auf keiner schulter mehr
Als sie ertragen kann."

The while she sang, she went about the dear
Old room, with here and there a dainty touch,
Or flower rearranged, where all perfection was
Before; with touches light her lips she pressed
Upon the pillow's snow, and thought his head
Would rest in comfort here. "Good night!" she said,
Her voice in peaceful silence drifts away.

Evard beheld the light as he approached,
And heard the words, "Sei stark mein herz," sung low,
Like music played in organ loft above,
And thought how blessed he who hath, till life
Is done, such music in his home. Such waves
Of keen and sad regret swept o'er his soul.

When words and music ceased, then Evard on,
The casement gently tapped. A silence fell,
He softly tapped again, and called so low:
"Oh, Bernardine!" Unto the door she came;
Above the heart the hands she pressed as if
To stay its beating wild.
"Come in! I thought
It news of my Emile. Would it were morn,
That we might start at once." Then in his face
The pity saw. Oh! speak I pray if aught
Hath heard."
"Dear heart! tis of Emile I came
To speak." Evard told then of what the guards
Had said. "A cruel nation's rigid law!"
He said. "Oh, hush----h, it is forbidden thus to speak;

And walls have ears." said Bernardine; and then
All crushed, and helpless sat, nor spoke a word.
The clasping and unclasping hands told of
A struggle fierce within.
"E'en this shall not
Deter us now, so grieve no more; we leave
Tomorrow as we planned; the early dawn
Shall see us on our way—and thou shalt care
For thy Emile, in France as well. We leave
The cot in Sophia's charge while thou art gone.

"Will trust it all to thee, and follow thy
Advice; thou noblest, truest earthly friend!
What shall we do when thou art gone? my friend!"
Said Bernardine, tears in her voice, tears in
Her shining eyes.
"Hath all in readiness?
Then seek thy needed rest. Good night! Dear heart!
Good night!"
In hush of holy night, outside
Where all nature listening seemed,
With lifted hands, Evard prayed blessing on
Those orphaned two, Emile and Bernardine.

One was, to whom Johannes' movements were
Unknown; his sister Bertha, ugly one!
The ogress of his home, and well for him
That such the case. Yet ofttimes closely comes

A retribution in the steps of wrong.
Thus with Johannes. That night, on reaching home,
There something in his manner was which him
Betrayed; which Bertha of the falcon eye
Detected instantly.
To greedy soul
There came such thoughts, of bargain poor—
Or loss of wealth, perhaps, to cause such state
As this; and so she nagged unmerciful
Until from desperation sheer he told
Her all; how Bernardine again refused,
Now all for him, alas! was lost, and life
No further charm.
For once she was of speech
Bereft, such wond'rous power amazement hath.
The while her anger gathered force, then burst.

Among his unshorn locks her fingers twined,
And sharply 'gainst the wall his head she rapped,
Then into corner forced him quite, where he
Abject and cowering sat.
Then loudly shrieked.
"What! did he mean to bring another there?
A jade, this wealth to share? which she
Had toiled so hard to gain. Would he add to
Her care, with more to feed and wait upon?
She always thought he was a dunce! but now
He was demented quite! his proper place
With Maurice was, such hovel, far too good
For one dissatisfied with home like his.

What! bring another woman here?" and then
She rapped his head again.
All cautiously
Around she peered, that none were near, then to
A ghostly depth her voice she sent. "Let her
Such doings farther hear; Gendarmes she'd call
And clearly state his case—she'd show the graves
In Tsessor wood—and 'neath their privet hedge
Of evergreens, the jewels hid."
Pale as the dead
In winding sheet, and quite as powerless,
Was he, but managed in a voice most weak
To plead for leniency; oh, spare! and he
Would err no more.
Yet, still like fate she o'er
Him stood, with tirade of such vengeful threats—
Until his horror knew no bounds; and then,
With sundry rousing cuffs, she silent points
To loft above—and bed, and glad was he
For such release.
Upon his couch he threw
Himself clothed as he was, and shivered there
As with an ague chill—while faces leered—
Or seemed to leer—from out the darkness of
The room; where every object swam, and then
He deemed that death was near, and hoped it was;
With Bernardine forever lost to him.
So hard—so dominant was Bertha's will,
He yielded all, there was no choice.

And still
He was afraid to die. He knew where they
Would bury him, beside Jacobin close;[14]
And they, at enmity had been. He'd wronged
Jacobin, this he owned. Ah! he could see
The freshened mound—the rusty crucifix
Awry—now wished that he had set it straight.

What if those crosses, two, hobnobbing leaned?
He'd have a crucifix, he knew he would—
The dead each had! with R. I. P. plain writ
Thereon. How could he rest, Jacobin near?
He thought he must quite suffocate, and, as
One buried quite, should chance to wake from trance—
Clutched in the darkness at his throat, aloud
In terror shrieked his sister Bertha's name.

She, springing up the creaking stair, burst in
The door upon him there, and bade him hush!
When told how near death's door he was—if not
Already dead—then as with trembling fear
She was—made holy sign, and threw herself
The ground upon, and groveled there—called on
All Saints, and promise made, if only this
Dear soul, was spared—called all endearing names,
And fondled him, until he then forgot
His fears. But when all feebly ventured he
That he with Bernardine might wed—would she
Consent? flounced out the room, and slammed
The door.

Part Seven

Part Seven

BESIDE his lowly couch knelt Bernardine,
And gently dried the falling tears; his head
She pillowed on her breast, and soothed him as
A child. Though travel stained, and weary she,
Yet would not brook the least delay; herself
Forgot, for him she loved; spoke words of cheer
And smiled the while her heart all breaking was.
Had scarcely known him, if in other lands
They'd met, so was he changed.
As one who feels
His feeble grasp slip from the spar, where he
Has held through weary days of drifting lone,
Feels timely hands reach out, and pluck him from
A watery grave, takes no more thought but rests.
Thus with Emile, now they had come, felt from
His heart a load removed; in childlike faith
He gladly trusted all to Bernardine.

Evard a consultation held with one
Most noted for his skill. "Yes, 'tis the dread
Disease," he saith, "All seated deep; a year
Or two thou hast thy friend, and mayest remove
Him where thou wilt."
He waited message from
A friend in far Paris, and when it came

The trio soon were on their way. They found
Some quarters snug in Rue Chapon. For him
The journey proved too great—though broken oft.
The strength which buoyed Emile gave way; all weak,
And helpless he became; foremost skill
He had, until triumphant nature was.

Soft amethystine haze subdued, and veiled
The ardor of the golden days, such days!
All filled with sweetness of content were they;
For peace and joy, twin angels fair, were guests
At every simple feast, where Bernardine
As household Priestess was—in stranger land,
Which hath no word for comfort, or for home.

There Bernardine, Pomona viewed, hung 'mid
The treasures of the world. How far away
Those summer days beneath the orchard shade.
And daily viewing thus the dear home vale,
Such memories came—a treasure rich indeed;
A comfort was amid surroundings strange.

Emile earned many a franc in studios near,
Where soon his history was known; then life
Took on a tinting new—the future then
Such hopeful prospects held. They were content.

When winter days had fully come, it found
Them at a cosy home in Brittany;
Evard on orders worked through sunny days;
"The day dream," this picture was, and Bernardine
In Breton garb sat on the rocks, sun crowned.

The folded hands lie idle in her lap—
The knitting unheeded, fallen to the sand—
While she with rapt and thoughtful face looked out
Across the sunlit sea; the same light in her eyes
The former picture showed.
The silver sands
All girt with splendor of the fleece like foam—
With sparkling light, and laughter of the sea—
With whispering melody in every breeze;
Such days as these hath deathless memory.
Nor questioned the vast unknown, but grasped
The present blessings of each passing hour;
Could each this lesson learn, then life would hold
Far less of care, and men might lose regret.

Above the peaceful slumber of the hills
The queenly summer smiled again, and all
The land with fragrance—sweet sun harmonies
Was filled. Our trio still found happy home
In Brittany; a tiny cot was theirs—
All wreathed about in snowy clematis;
Wisteria, too, hung purple banners there, and
The bordered ways, with roses bloomed, where at
The door a little court was set, all massed
With blossoms pure and bright; while at the rear
A garden smiled.
Here Bernardine, through all
The day made fair the garden ways. Emile,
Upbolstered sat in sunshine's genial glow.

"Wilt come to me? my Bernardine!" he called,
And when she came, he said, "Wilt with me for
A space, our places change? So hard it is
To idle here, whilst thou art delving in
The soil. I am not ill! methinks it is
But indolence. Worthless fellow I!
That I must burden thee. God grant that all
Thy life be not thus sacrificed for me."

With kisses warm, his farther words she hushed;
"Nay! rather for God's mercies grateful be—
Our friend Evard—our cosy home—with means
Supplied for future needs; oh, think of these!
Dear God! what shall we do, when he hath gone—
So far! with seas between us, and our friend?"

"Methinks my heart must break, when I behold
His face no more; this friend so true and good!
Such gratitude my poor heart holds—would yield
Earth's dearest joy, yea, life itself! for his
Dear sake—and count it joy; yet naught can do,
So weak and worthless I," sobbed poor Emile.
He little knew Evard for him had put
Aside life's dearest joy, fair Bernardine.

Evard his preparations made for home.
At last the parting came. They earnest plead
"Just for to-day, remain—go not until
The morrow comes." Nor dreamed how loth he was

To leave such earthly paradise,
And Bernardine. Ah! he must hunger, this
He knew, for daily sight of her dear face.

She had no hint of his great love, her heart
Held only her Emile; and he the thought
Which filled her days. She lived for him.
And oft
He watched her thus, with ministrations bend
Above Emile, while in her heavenly eyes
There shone a light—the light that's not of earth.

'Twas thus he painted them; the picture would
A comfort be when far away.
Farewells
Were said, and as Emile clung to Evard
He whispered low, "I'll not last long; when I
Am gone our Bernardine will be alone,
So lone! Evard, wilt thou not care for her?"

Then sorrowing he turned away, nor could
Endure to see him go.
And Bernardine,
Ah! little dreamed his whole heart dwelt in that
One tender, parting kiss which Evard gave;
Then went his way, his heart in Brittany.

The autumn found Evard at home once more—
In grand New York. His friends all found in him

Such change—had grown reserved; beyond the sea
His treasure was—his Bernardine.
The one
True comfort which was his, the letters sent
Him by those two, in far off Brittany.

Now it the vintage season was; clusters
The rarest for him were put aside. Then
Winter days had come, and boughs bent low 'neath
Stainless snow, reminding them of his dear heart,
So pure it was.
The roses smiled again,
One spray alone held thirty-four, a rose
For each year of this life he'd known; across
His pillow lay the spray; Emile slept there
The night, of Evard dreamed. He seemed so near!
Oh! would he come again? They missed him so!
The sunshine seemed less bright with him away.

Emile, a marked improvement showed, and delved
In garden spot, for briefest space, they hopeful of
The future spoke. Thus one by one the years
That passed had numbered four.
Emile
Had weaker grown, till he must keep his bed;
And then they knew there was no hope; these were
Most precious days of all—a benediction seemed.
Within his face the angel shown while still
Enshrined in earthly clay. For such it is
Not hard to die.

Long had he lain, and gazed
At Bernardine, through half closed eyes. She at
His bedside sat with some light work; the while
Her fingers deftly at the fabric wrought,
She softly crooned an abends lied. He loved
Her thus, and thus she oftimes sat.
He sleeps,
She thought, and still sang on in fading light.

"My Bernardine!" he whispered low, "Come near,
My love! Thou hast my good angel been—made all
The brightness life hath known. Dear heart! one wish
Remains—so precious, it seems for me
The universe to fill; and this it is,
When I am gone, and thou art lonely, dear!
Perchance, should brother Evard come, and crave
Thy hand, give him thy heart as well; 'tis he
Of all the world, is worthy such as thee.
When I am laid to rest, let our dear past
Be as a dream most beautiful. I am
So weary! Kiss me good night."
So fond
On lip and brow her kisses fell. "Schlaf wohl!
Schlaf wohl!" And Bernardine was all alone.

E'er yet 'twas morn, Evard in his far home
The sad news read, and soon beneath the waves
Of restless sea this message sped. "Bide where
Thou art, and I at once will come to thee."

Conclusion

AND there Evard found Bernardine,
All outward calm; her grief too sacred was
For show. She'd done all human love could do
For her Emile; their past was as a poet's dream.
His grave, a sacred fane, 'round which she wreathed
The lilies fair, as in St. Blasien's long
Ago she twined about the pictured Christ.

Again, Sophia had home with Bernardine.
Evard was there, and life with them moved on
With calmest flow.
And Bernardine still trimmed
The garden ways, while Evard busied with
His art. Peace came again to hearts bereft;
Till Bernardine sang at her tasks.
'Twas then
Evard told his great love, and when he craved
Her heart and hand, she did not say him nay.

[FINIS.]

Notes

Notes

The characters in this Idyl are all real, and friends of the author. Bernardine, an adopted daughter of Bettlach's Innkeeper, Franz Stehlin, is now Mrs. Ray. The house frau is Mrs. Stehlin. Johann Sieter and Otto Henning are Coast Guards, of which there are four in Bettlach. The Gendarmes reside at Oltingen. The author was at one time arrested by those famous Gendarmes, while making a sketch of a wayside shrine; they mistook him for a French spy, and as he entered Alsace without a passport, had considerable trouble proving his identity.

Adora was a Mrs. Boll, now deceased, an estimable old lady, but dwelling in great poverty. Emile is teacher in Bettlach, Emile Welter; Maria is his sister, a lady of many rare virtues. The Burgomaster, Mr. Simeon Isadore. Maurice, Draier, a poor demented fellow living by himself, in a miserably poor old hovel; he makes night hideous with his curses, as he vainly tries to dislodge the ghosts which are constantly about him. He possesses innate cunning, however; he remembers all the peasants' mistakes and failings, and has a habit of calling them out at the most inopportune seasons.

The Inn of the "Crossed Keys" stands just upon the outskirts of Linchdorf, its host and hostess, brother and sister, honest, hard working people, highly esteemed. The name Habiteur is a name found upon an old tombstone, in the little Gottes acre, at Hagendale, Alsace. Evard is the Author. The principal facts are all those of his own experience, with the exception of the love affair.

No. 1, page 7

"O'er arched with laden bough of fruit, and nut."

Nowhere in the world are the highways better kept than in Alsace. Bordering the road on either side are great trees of fruit and walnut. Woe unto the person who shall touch one of them, although those that have fallen may be freely gathered. This fruit is the property of the German Government, and is sold to the highest bidder, the proceeds belonging to the government.

No. 2, page 8

"A quaint old church, St. Blasiens, here hath stood."

St. Blasien's record dates back to 1496; beyond that it is lost. The Author has in his possession a stone head of exquisite workmanship, representing the Christ, set up by the Crusaders in the eleventh century, in a shrine near St. Blasiens. The church must have stood then.

No. 3, page 11

"Glad harvest home."

I was broken of my rest until far into the morning by a family making merry over the harvest home; there was an accordeon accompaniment to the German song they sang. Happy people, rejoicing over the one load of wheat, safely garnered to-day. The load was decorated with garlands, and green boughs from the forest, upon which the entire family rode, singing and shouting through the hamlet.

Author's journal, Bettlach, Aug. 10, 1895.

No. 4, page 11

"The ripened grain on sacred altar lain."

This morning the children covered the side altar at St. Blasiens with tiny sheaves of ripened wheat. The finest heads are selected. The sheaves were decorated with roses and streamers. The Priest blessed the grain, then it was taken home, where it will be carefully preserved until Spring, when those heads will be threshed, and those kernels mingled with the seed sown.

Author's journal, Bettlach, Aug. 17, 1895.

No. 5, page 16

"Yon, a mighty army lay,
And long besieged with hunger, perished."

Here spreads out a beautiful plain where ripened harvests are waving, above which the tenderest skies of blue are smiling. Once upon a time, tradition saith, an army, long besieged, perished miserably; the dead were found with grass in their mouths; had vainly tried by this means to appease the ravages of hunger.

Everywhere by the roadside and in the forest are crucifixes, marking the spot where some accident has occurred, or some apparition has appeared. The land is filled with legends of ghosts, in all conditions, in which Bettlach's elders believe still.

A few miles from Bettlach, in a narrow defile in the mountains, is a tortuous cave, which, tradition saith, in the year A. D. 610, was the habitation of a strange race of people, said to be Brownies, who only sallied forth at midnight to supply their wants, from the gardens and orchards in that vicinity. The inhabitants of Pfiert frequently scattered meal at the entrance of the cave, and ever at morn there was the imprint of tiny feet.

Here upon an Alsacian hillside, gushes a spring of cold, crystal clear water. It is recorded that during the 30 years' war, St. Walberga, driven from her convent, was seeking refuge in France, her virgins, who accompanied her, became famished on the way. St. Walberga thrust her staff in the sod, and at first oil and then water gushed forth.

In 1862, an invalid, following the instructions of a dream, bathed in its waters and was healed. He built a memorial shrine upon the spot; it is a dingy old place, with mildewed walls and broken floor; a rare old altar, and upon the walls a hideous representation of the crucified Savior.

In yon wood
Three graves of Martyrs, mark a place for prayer."

Deep in the forest are the graves of three martyred Virgins who, in 1106, were accompanying St. Ursula upon her pilgrimage to Rome. They were crossing Alsace from Basle, by way of the old Roman highway, built in the first year of the Christian era; they were captured and put to death by the Hunns, and hastily buried in the woods.

When they became missed, and search instituted, their grave was discovered by a pure white lily with a dash of blood at its heart, growing above them. Since then the graves have been a shrine, containing many effigies and relics of miraculous cures performed in answer to prayer.

There is a legend connected with these "holy graves" in the 13th century. The pious people of Wenswiller, a hamlet of Alsace, exhumed the bodies, and with imposing ceremonies had them interred in consecrated ground; immediately a terrific storm of hail and lightning settled over the hamlet, and never abated until the bodies were again placed in their wildwood graves.

No. 6, page 16

"St. Blasien's picture."

The Ecce Homo, in St. Blasiens, was painted by the Author. During the Lenten season, and on the fast day, it occupies a position upon one of the side altars. The lilies wreathing it are placed there as offerings.

No. 7, page 18

Or as on eves
Of Sabbaths restful, they blithely sang their German airs."

It is the custom of those peasants, with their families, upon Sabbath eves, to gather at the Inn, where in little groups about the tables, over pipe and mug, spend the evening in social converse; while the young people sit outside, grouped about the doorway, and sing their happy German airs, until curfew is rung. There is seldom an intoxicated person among them.

No. 8, page 20

"Some wald recht monarch has succumbed."

The forests of Germany, consisting of many thousand acres, are the property of the Government from time immemorial; the finest, most vigorous tree of all the forest has been selected as Monarch of the Forest. A little shrine, containing an image of the Blessed Virgin, is fastened against the tree. To this tree is extended waldrecht, the right of the forest, and is not interfered with, although it may last a hundred years. But should it die, the shrine is transferred to a younger tree, usually beech or oak, which in turn possesses waldrecht.

No. 9, page 27

"Was loyal to his France."

At the close of the Franco-Prussian war, to all Alsacians was given the choice with whom they would cast their lots. Those whose interests and property were in Alsace, rather than have their possessions confiscated, chose Germany. Those whose lots were cast with France dare venture across the line only at rare intervals, and only at night, while anxious friends are stationed to watch for any appearance of the Gendarmes. A few hours are thus spent in intense fear, then the morning light finds them again across the line in France.

No. 10, page 33

Landskron. An exquisite bit of ruin crowns a promontory near the Swiss border, was built A. D. 536. The walls are of an immense thickness. The Baron who constructed this Castle was a severe task-master, forcing the peasants to perform the labor gratuitously. The material had to be brought from a great distance. This ruin is being preserved by the Government, as a relic of feudal times.

No. 11, page 46

Rothberg Castle was built in 1196, is at present little more than a heap of stones. Still the tower mentioned is intact, the initials L. M. are cut upon a stone above the old fireplace. I have never learned if there is a legend connected with them. There seems to be very little known regarding the history of Rothberg.

No. 12, page 71

The Coast Guards have curiously constructed huts, of woven boughs, screened among the evergreens, close beside the secret paths of the forest, where they can keep a watch upon all passersby and also to protect them from night dews and inclement weather.

No. 13, page 72

The Coast Guards are permitted to carry at night, together with their sword and rifle, a camp stool, and a plaid, as protection from the dampness of the forest.

No. 14, page 105

In Alsace, the land is considered so valuable that the few rods enclosed in the little God's Acre, is used again and again. Beginning at one side, the dead are buried, not in sections or by families, but promiscuously, youth and age, friend and foe, as the case may be, as in this instance Jacobin's had been the last interment, had Habiteur died, he would have occupied the ground beside Jacobin.

THE AUTHOR.

Detroit, Mich., 1904.

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